

**Coventry City Council**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of Health and Social Care Scrutiny Board (5) held at 10.00**  
**am on Wednesday, 11 March 2020**

Present:

Members: Councillor J Clifford (Chair)  
Councillor M Ali  
Councillor L Harvard  
Councillor J Innes  
Councillor R Lancaster  
Councillor D Skinner  
Councillor H Sweet

Co-Opted Members: Mrs S Hanson and Mrs K Jones, Scrutiny Board 2

Other Members: Councillors J Blundell and K Sandhu, Scrutiny Board (2)  
Councillor R Brown, Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee  
B Gittins, M Mutton and P Seaman, Cabinet and Deputy  
Cabinet Members

Employees:

V Castree, Place Directorate  
J Essex, People Directorate  
L Gaulton, People Directorate  
L Knight, Place Directorate

Other representatives: Gemma Carrwright, Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership  
Trust (CWPT)  
Ali Cole, Coventry and Warwickshire Councils and 3 CCGs  
Anna Hargrave, South Warwickshire CCG  
Jamie Soden, Coventry and Rugby CCG  
Rob Spencer, CWPT

Apologies: Councillors J Birdi and E Ruane  
D Spurgeon - Co-opted Member

## **Public Business**

### **31. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **32. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2020 were signed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

33. **Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) Pathway and Support to Children and Young People in Coventry**

The Board considered a joint briefing note which provided an overview of national policy and strategy relating to children with Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC), local services and local governance; an update on what was working well and areas of concern; and detailed the next steps and plans. Ali Cole, Coventry and Warwickshire Councils and the three Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), Gemma Cartwright and Rob Spencer, Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership Trust (CWPT) and Jamie Soden, Coventry and Rugby CCG attended the meeting for the consideration of this item. Councillors P Seaman and B Gittins, Cabinet Member and Deputy Cabinet Member for Education and Young People also attended along with Councillors J Blundell and K Sandhu and S Hanson and K Jones, all Members of the Education and Children's Scrutiny Board (2). Councillor Brown, Chair of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee, was also in attendance.

The briefing note provided an explanation of autism and set out the requirements of legislation on Local Authorities and CCGs for supporting children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities including autism. Reference was made to the national plan, Building the Right Support and to the local initiative – the Transforming Care Programme. The NHS Long Term Plan included a specific focus on autism and learning disabilities although there was no clarity on how much funding would be available to support delivery of the plan. A key deliverable was a reduction in numbers of children and young people with a learning disability and/ or autism being admitted to a mental health hospital.

The Coventry and Warwickshire Learning Disability and Autism Transformation Board was responsible for the delivery of the NHS Long Term Plan objectives in relation to autism and learning disabilities, and in addition for overseeing the development and delivery of the joint all age autism strategy.

Members were informed that nationally and locally there was no register of people with autism recorded so the true prevalence in Coventry and Warwickshire was not known. Based on the national prevalence, it was estimated there were around 3,090 people living with autism in Coventry of which there were around 673 children living with autism, during 2019.

Reference was made to the wide range of services available in Coventry for parents and carers, children and young people, and schools to support children and young people who are on the waiting list or have received a diagnosis of autism. Details of these services were set out in an appendix to the briefing note. As part of the CAMHS offer, Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership Trust (CWPT) provided a specialist Neurodevelopmental Service, across Coventry and Warwickshire. In Coventry, the services provided pre-assessment, assessment and post diagnostic support to pre-school and school age children. The briefing note detailed what the service delivered. In addition CWPT delivered a children's intensive support service. The multidisciplinary teams, work alongside CAMHS where required, and the support provided was outlined.

Vibes (autism social club), was a service delivered by Coventry and Warwickshire Mind, who provided support to children and young people with autism by helping to develop confidence, social skills, self-esteem, and understanding of their own

emotional health. The briefing note also set out the provision provided by Schools and Education to support children with autism.

The briefing note highlighted the increased demand for autism assessments which were anticipated to rise to by 33% by the end of 2019/20. Locally demand was significantly outstripping capacity across children's diagnostic pathways. The number of early year's children presenting with highly complex communication needs was increasing, which had placed a strain on specialist providers within the city. Also, the demand for specialist provision commissioned for autistic people was outstripped by capacity. The number of pre-school and school aged children on the waiting list for autism assessments remained high. January 2020 data shows 172 pre-school aged children and 940 school aged children were on the waiting list for assessment (1,112 combined). Further details were set out in a second appendix to the briefing note.

The briefing note highlighted waiting time for diagnosis, with pre-school aged children waiting on average 78 weeks for an initial assessment and school aged children waiting on average 110 weeks. Young people were being diagnosed with autism while inpatients in mental health hospitals. The options being implemented by commissioners and CWPT to reduce waiting times were set out but weren't having an impact on the waiting list and waiting times due to increased demand. Also, the national workforce shortages in specialist roles relating to autism were acknowledged.

Information was provided on what was working well – the joint all age autism strategy; the new services for children pre and post diagnosis; the autism awareness training for the children's workforce; the support for children at risk of mental health hospital admission; and the joint commissioning. The next steps were also detailed.

Members questioned the representatives and officers on a number of issues and responses were provided, matters raised included:

- Concerns about the length of the waiting lists and waiting times
- Concerns about the gap in provision when moving from childhood to adulthood while waiting for a diagnosis for autism, with a request to strengthen support in this area
- Further details about staff shortages and resources
- The links with the two local universities to try to reduce employee vacancies
- The importance of early intervention at a young age for a child with autism, also providing support for families
- Clarification about autism and the need to support people's differences
- The importance of raising awareness of autism
- The chances of being able to reduce the numbers of children and young people with autism being admitted to mental health units
- An emphasis on awareness raising with other school pupils
- Why were the numbers significantly higher in Coventry compared to other areas
- What happens when elderly adult parents can no longer cope with their autistic adult children
- The implications for families of the long wait for a diagnosis

- Further information on the ongoing work to reduce waiting lists and waiting times
- Further details about the pilot scheme in schools and why were only three schools involved at the current time
- An acknowledgement that awareness raised expectations
- Support for Coventry becoming an Autism Friendly City and for having an Autism Awareness Day in Coventry
- An acknowledgement that a diagnosis of autism was integral to providing families with an equitable life, with particular reference to PIP payments.
- Support for all the work being undertaken in the city in help children and adults with autism and their families
- A suggestion that autism awareness training be provided for both Councillors and officers
- A request for the draft All Age Autism Strategy to be submitted to a future Board meeting
- A suggestion that a letter be sent to the city's three MPs asking them to request more resources for Coventry and Warwickshire to support the ongoing work with autism.

**RESOLVED that:**

**(1) The progress to date on services to support children be noted and the plans to further progress the Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) support available to children and young people living in Coventry who are on the waiting list and who have been diagnosed (pre and post diagnosis support) be endorsed.**

**(2) Support be given to:**

- i) Coventry becoming an Autism Friendly City**
- ii) Holding an Autism Awareness Week in the summer 2020.**

**(3) The draft All Age Autism Strategy be submitted to a future meeting of the Board along with further information on the Autistic Spectrum Condition pathway and the waiting lists for initial assessment.**

**(4) Consideration to be given to establishing Autism Awareness training for Councillors and officers.**

**(5) The Chair, Councillor Clifford, supported by Councillor Sandhu, to send a letter to the City's 3 MPs requesting that they pursue the options for more resources being provided for Coventry and Warwickshire to enhance the current partnership work being undertaken to support children and young people with autism and their families.**

**34. Maternity and Child Health Programme Update**

The Board considered a briefing note and presentation of Anna Hargrave, South Warwickshire CCG, which provided an introduction to the Coventry and Warwickshire Maternity and Child Health Programme prior to a more detailed presentation on the engagement that had taken place as part of the programme. Councillors P Seaman and B Gittins, Cabinet Member and Deputy Cabinet

Member for Education and Young People attended the meeting for the consideration of this item along with Councillors J Blundell and K Sandhu and Mrs S Hanson and K Jones, all Members of the Education and Children's Scrutiny Board (2).

The briefing note indicated that maternity and child health services had been chosen for review since improving the health and welfare of mothers and their children was the best way to a healthier population, as well as the best way to achieve a fairer society for the future by improving health and tackling inequalities in childhood, where some groups had difficulties accessing the support they needed. In addition, there were changes in local demographic and population trends. There was an acknowledgement that despite all the good work happening across Coventry and Warwickshire to deliver maternity and child health services, there was always more that could be done to make these services better.

The briefing note set out the following goals for the review:

- i) Give everyone the best start in life by putting a greater focus on supporting mothers, babies and their families before, during and following birth;
- ii) Help mothers stop smoking during pregnancy and support families to stop smoking in the home;
- iii) Support mothers and families to be happy and healthy and reduce the number of women suffering from perinatal mental health issues, as well as support those in their wider family such as their partner, whilst providing better support to those that do find themselves with mental health issues;
- iv) Reduce the inequalities and challenges some of our population face in access to, availability of and quality of services;
- v) Reduce the number of infants, children and young people dying prematurely;
- vi) Tackle childhood obesity, poverty, abuse and neglect, and improve health outcomes.

It was the intention to engage with local people and gather feedback to help create a set of desirable criteria and draft outcomes. To date almost 1,000 people had been spoken to about their experience of maternity and child health services, what was important to them, what worked well and what they would like to see improved. Support had been provided by a number of local community and voluntary sector organisations, parent and toddler groups, refugee centres and children's centres. Additional engagement had been undertaken with seldom heard groups to ensure work was as robust and inclusive as possible.

The presentation highlighted the following ambition:

'Our vision is to work together, across Health and Social Care, to develop and deliver joined-up services commissioned for babies, children, young people and their families. To ensure they are safe, accessible, responsive to individual needs, promote independence and are sustainable for the future.'

Further information was provided on the reasons for the focus on maternity and child health along with details of Phase 1 Engagement which was a listening exercise as follows

Stage 1 – co-creation events with local families

Stage 2 -online survey aimed at expectant parents and parents/ carers of 0-5

Stage 3 – interviews with frontline staff and community and voluntary sector.

Phase 2 was a second round of engagement to check and challenge.

The members present questioned the representative on a number of issues and responses were provided, matters raised included:

- Further details on the drivers behind the review and was resource the main issue
- The numbers of service users
- A request for Infant mortality and support for families be considered at a future meeting
- The reasons behind the increasing numbers of complex births
- What was the end strategy for the goals of the programme
- Had consideration been given to the higher risks associated with domestic violence
- The involvement of refugee and migrant women in the consultation.

**RESOLVED that:**

**(1) The content of the briefing note be noted and the direction of travel be supported.**

**(2) A briefing note be circulated to members providing:**

- (i) Confirmation on the consultation undertaken with refugees and migrants**
- (ii) Information on the number of service users**

**(3) Infant mortality and support for families be considered at a future meeting in the new municipal year**

**(4) An update report on the Maternity and Child Health Programme be submitted to a future meeting of the Board in October 2020.**

**35. Work Programme 2019-20 and Outstanding Issues**

The Board noted their work programme for the current year, including the postponement of the meeting scheduled to take place on 8<sup>th</sup> April.

**36. Any other items of Public Business**

There were no additional items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 11.55 am)