

At a meeting of the HEALTH AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held in Committee Room 1 of the CITY HALL, SUNDERLAND on TUESDAY, 29 NOVEMBER, 2022 at 5:30pm.

Present:-

Councillor Butler in the Chair

Councillors Heron, Potts, Speding, D. Trueman, and Usher

Also in attendance:-

Ms. Elaine Coghill – Deputy Director of Nursing, South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust

Mr. Nigel Cummings – Scrutiny Officer, Sunderland City Council

Ms. Andrea Hetherington – Director of Corporate Affairs and Legal, South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust

Ms. Lorraine Hughes – Public Health Specialist, Sunderland City Council

Ms. Claire McManus - Divisional Director, South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust

Ms. Joanne Stewart – Principal Governance Services Officer, Sunderland City Council

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were given on behalf of Councillors Ayre, Bond, Chisnall, and M. Walker.

Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 1st November, 2022

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee held on 1st November, 2022 (copies circulated) be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Declarations of Interest (including Whipping Declarations)

Councillor Butler made an open declaration as he may have a professional interest in items on the agenda as an employee of North Cumbria Integrated Care Services.

Maternity Services Assurance Update – NHS Foundation Trust

South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust submitted a report which provided the Committee with an assurance update on maternity services at the Trust.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Ms. Claire McManus, Divisional Director, South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust took Members through the report which provided an update on maternity services at South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust as a result of the partial compliance for CNST (Clinical Negligence Scheme for Trusts) MIS (Maternity Incentive Scheme) reported in the Trust's annual report for 2021/2022. The report covered a number of key issues including:-

- Maternity Service Provision – the last two years;
- Maternity Services in Sunderland; and
- Maternity Assurance Update.

The Chairman thanked Ms. McManus for her informative report and referred to the sum of £380,000 which had been awarded; against the bid of £932,000; and asked what the effects were of only being granted a third of the overall bid. Ms. McManus advised that they had to prioritise where the investment went and explained that the grant was based on levelling up across the country and as a region they were in a good position in relation to staffing. The monies would go directly into the frontline midwifery services.

Councillor Butler advised that his sister spoke very highly of the maternity services but had mentioned that at her most recent appointment she had noted that there were six people who had failed to arrive for their appointment and asked what measures, if any, could be taken and was advised that from a Trust perspective there was a policy around improving attendance at appointments and that from a maternity perspective there would be a follow up from the patient's midwife who would also be working with them.

Councillor Heron commented that she had been horrified at some of the findings of the Ockenden and East Kent reports but praised those who were involved in the changeover of the maternity services in the Trust and felt that overall it was a great report. She commented that she was not a fan of having to bid for funding for services that were so vital and Ms. Hetherington commented that the Trust had also made an additional investment to the maternity service as there were obviously a lot of actions that had come from the reports which needed to be completed; whilst ensuring that the day to day work of the services was not suffering.

Councillor McDonough commented that the reports highlighted a lack of compassion and kindness; which he found very worrying; but asked how that could be taught and how they were making sure that their staff had these traits and was advised that as an organisation they had values based recruitment and a behaviour compact so that across the board there was a focus around compassion, kindness, honesty and openness but it was difficult as teams had experienced so much and had been so under pressure that it could affect staff. They were supporting teams and reminding them of the principles and also doing more work with the teams to help them work together, having a common focus and bonding to become a stronger multi-professional team which was really crucial in maternity services. Ms. Coghill also

advised that following recruitment, staff went through a care certificate programme so that there was support given to them from day one.

In response to a follow up query from Councillor McDonough, Ms. McManus informed Members that she was not aware of non-attendance at appointments being down to the patient having previous bad experiences with the service.

Councillor Mann congratulated the service on being compliant with the seven Ockenden IEA's as set out in the appendix to the report and could see the great improvements that were being made in the service but raised her concerns in relation to poor fetal monitoring and poor bereavement care which had been some of the emerging findings and was pleased to hear that there had been a dedicated bereavement midwife put in place. Councillor Mann also asked if some statistics could be provided on the improvements in fetal monitoring which Ms. McManus advised they could provide. Ms. McManus also advised that the pre-term birth service was one of the services they had invested in to expand and enhance, explaining that they now had a consultant lead and dedicated clinics with a new consultant also being appointed to the service.

In response to a question from Councillor Usher as to what was being done to retain staff, Ms. McManus as advised that they had a dedicated patient and staff experienced lead midwife who was doing a lot of work with the team on engagement and events, being a conduit for the staff and working with the senior team and the Executive Director of Nursing and Midwifery. They were trying to raise the profile of the services through other professionals in the organisation and trying to improve the experience for staff whilst recognising the difficulties they face. The Royal College of Nursing had reviewed some national statistics in terms of workforce and initially they had felt that the country was 1,600 midwives short which had now risen to 2,000 due to pressures and staff wanting to leave the profession.

Ms. Hetherington also advised that the pressures in the service could lead to staff wanting to change direction of their career but informed Members that they had been holding frequent engagement events with the Chief Executive where staff could sit and talk to them so they could understand the pressures they were under, especially following the reviews which had put a spotlight on maternity services.

Responding to a follow up question from Councillor Usher regarding how parents were helped following pre-term bereavement, Ms. Hetherington advised that for a number of years they had been fortunate to have support from the 4Louis Charity and they had a dedicated suite they could offer to families who suffered that tragic experience. She also explained that they had their own charity so they could continue to fund any additions or replenishments to the provision if needed.

Councillor Mann referred to the summary of the Ockenden report and endorsed that the changes could not happen overnight and recognised that every Trust in the country would be trying to secure funding to improve services and commented that she felt that what the Trust were doing and how they were prioritising the service was going in the right direction as they were hearing improved feedback from residents in their wards.

Councillor Speding commented that retention of staff appeared to be an issue across all departments in the NHS and asked at what point does the handover occur from

maternity services to the community services, i.e. health visitors, etc. as there always seemed to be a disconnect between those services in the past. Ms. McManus advised that the Ockenden report had not specifically referred to any concerns in relation to this and explained that it referred to the maternity wards partnership and increasing their involvement in all aspects of maternity care. The family hubs helped in terms of post-natal care through joined up working across health, local authority and public health services.

Ms. Hughes advised that the role of the Health Visitor was another that was under a lot of pressure and a workforce that was really struggling and they were in a position where there were constant vacancies across the provision. Through workforce forecasting they understood what future staffing was needed so they looked to recruit at every opportunity and were aware that there was a national campaign launching soon to help as they knew there were big implications and challenges if positions continued to remain vacant.

Councillor Mann asked if they found that the massive delays in DBS checks was having any effect on filling positions and was informed that this was an issue; made even worse as they could not be chased up until 60 days after submission.

The Chairman thanked Ms. McManus for her report and attendance, and it was:-

2. RESOLVED that the content of the report be received and noted.

Health Protection Arrangements Update

The Executive Director of Health, Housing and Communities submitted a report which provided the Committee with an update on health protection arrangements in Sunderland.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Ms. Lorraine Hughes, Public Health Specialist, took Members through the report advising that the protection of the health of the population was one of the legally mandated responsibilities given to local authorities as part of the Health and Social Care Act 2012. The Committee were informed that the Executive Director of Health, Housing and Communities was responsible for the discharge of Sunderland's health protection functions.

Members were advised that the report included the health protection assurance report which was produced annually to provide an overview of health protection arrangements and some relevant activity across the city. The report had been endorsed by the Health and Wellbeing Board on 30 September, 2022.

The Chairman thanked Ms. Hughes for her report and invited comments and questions from Members of the Committee.

In response to a question from Councillor Mann as to how the Health Protection Team (HPT), based at Newcastle, would work should the region be hit with a dose of diphtheria for instance which was prevalent at the moment, and was informed by Ms. Hughes that the risk status at present was low as the vaccination rate of the

population was very high. There had been no recorded cases locally or regionally and they were kept up to date by the HPT. A national incident had been established to manage the issue and health protection advice had been given and followed. If they were made aware that there was an urgent incident then they would have an Outbreak Control Team (OCT) convened that day and action would be undertaken rapidly.

Councillor Mann also asked what could be done about conspiracy theories that circulated and may be stopping residents from taking up the booster vaccination and was advised that they continued to push the correct message out to residents, promoting what they needed to do to get the booster. They had arranged Facebook live question and answer events and they would continue to use social media, leaflets, the Council website and other methods to promote the taking up of it. Ms. Hughes commented that should Councillors have any further ways to promote the message she would be happy to consider them.

Councillor Mann also asked about private agency staff being given the flu vaccination as it was a concern of hers when they were going into care homes in the city and Ms. Hughes advised that she was aware that some agencies did pay for their staff to have those vaccinations as it was in their own interests to do that to ensure staff capacity but obviously this could not be enforced.

In closing, Councillor Mann congratulated them on the winter vaccination programme in the community centres; catching up with the pregnant population, and the brilliant idea of tying in with the Council warm spaces initiative sites.

Councillor McDonough referred to the fact that the report did not refer to business outside of government organisations and asked if they were looking to put anything in place so that should there be another pandemic, similar to CoVid, they would be able to reach them easier to offer support and possibly immunisation programmes as well. Ms. Hughes commented that individuals were contacted directly for vaccinations; and in terms of the booster vaccination not everyone would be eligible. Different groups were contacted and provided with their immunisations via different routes and some of the larger businesses would have their own occupational health teams that would also consider these issues and would lead on the business' approach as to if and how they would promote such a service.

In response to a further question from Councillor McDonough regarding promoting those messages to businesses, Ms. Hughes advised that there was the Healthy Work Award Programmes, which businesses signed up to, and an element of it to gain their accreditation was vaccination uptake and the vaccination offer.

Ms. Hughes also advised the Committee that should there be another pandemic or new virus they had learnt from their experiences during CoVid whereby they were having regular situation reports and providing a lot of active communications to businesses and workplaces giving guidance and support.

Councillor Speding asked if the Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA) screening had been restored and Ms. Hughes advised she would need to ask NHS England colleagues and get a response to him.

Councillor Speding asked if they could get some figures regarding the longevity of residents in the city and Ms. Hughes advised that the information was still available and updated annually and was included in the Public Health Annual Report which was submitted to this Committee.

Councillor Mann referred to the CoVid vaccination uptake for the spring booster set out ward by ward in the report and the low uptake for the Hendon and Millfield wards and was advised that multiple questions had been asked on several occasions at previous meetings and a whole suite of programmes to try and increase the level of uptake had been undertaken. Ms. Hughes advised that the evergreen offer would always be available but there was a lot of resource on the autumn/winter booster vaccinations at the moment. They continued to promote the vaccination programme in as many ways as possible but should Councillors have any further suggestions she would be happy to consider them.

Councillor Butler advised that he was happy to be contacted to provide the service in the Thompson Park Community Centre which was one of the sites for the Council's warm space initiative.

The Chairman thanked Ms. Hughes for her report and the information provided, and it was:-

3. RESOLVED that the Committee noted the content of the presentation and the information provided.

Work Programme 2022/2023

The Scrutiny, Mayoral and Members' Support Coordinator submitted a report (copy circulated) which attached the current work programme for the year and also provided an update on a number of potential topics, as raised by Members, for the Committee's consideration.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Mr. Cummings, Scrutiny Officer, presented the report advising that the report included a number of potential topics to consider along with a draft Scrutiny Work Programme for 2022/23. He informed the Committee that the work programme was a 'living' document and could continue to incorporate emerging issues as and when they arose throughout the forthcoming year.

Members having considered the report and update, it was:-

4. RESOLVED that the work programme, including amendments, and the update on topics for review during 2022/23, be received and noted.

Notice of Key Decisions

The Strategic Director of People, Communications and Partnerships submitted a report (copy circulated) providing Members with an opportunity to consider those

items on the Executive's Notice of Key Decisions for the 28 day period from 9 November, 2022.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Mr Cummings, Scrutiny Officer, having advised that if any further Members wished to receive further information on any of the items contained in the notice they should contact him directly, it was:-

5. RESOLVED that the Notice of Key Decisions be received and noted.

The Chairman then closed the meeting having thanked everyone for their participation.

(Signed) M. BUTLER,
Chairman.