

Minutes of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee

**Thursday 8th September, 2022 at 6.00 pm
in The Council Chamber at the Council House, Priory Road,
Dudley**

Present:

Councillor M Rogers (Chair)
Councillor P Atkins (Vice-Chair)
Councillors R Ahmed, H Bills, R Collins, A Davies, J Elliott, J Foster, M Hanif,
K Razzaq and T Westwood; J Griffiths (Co-opted Member).

Dudley MBC Officers:

M Abuaffan – Acting Director of Public Health and Wellbeing, M Bowsher –
Director of Adult Social Care, C King – Head of Environmental Health and
Trading Standards, L Tromans - Principal Environmental Health Officer and
H Mills – Democratic Services Officer.

Also in attendance:

Councillor I Bevan (Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing)
Councillor N Neale (Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care)

Black Country Integrated Commissioning Board – N Bucktin
Dudley Integrated Health and Care – H Codd
Pharmacy, Optometry and Dental NHS England – Tracy Harvey

17 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors
T Crumpton, A Hopwood, L Johnson, P Lowe, M Qari and D Stanley.

18 **Appointment of Substitute Members**

It was reported that Councillors H Bills, R Collins, J Foster and T Westwood had been appointed to serve as Substitute Members for Councillors M Qari, A Hopwood, P Lowe and D Stanley, respectively, for this meeting of the Committee only.

19 **Declarations of Interests**

No Member made a declaration of interest, in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct, in respect of any matter considered at the meeting.

20 **Minutes**

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 14th July, 2022, be approved as a correct record and signed.

21 **Public Forum**

The Chair reported that a written question, from a member of the public, had been submitted in advance of the meeting, as follows:-

According to UK Government statistics, in May 2020, 24,248 households in Dudley Borough were in fuel poverty. With the recent increase in energy prices and further rises on the way, many more will struggle to heat their homes this autumn and winter. What actions is the borough taking to help those at risk of or who are already experiencing fuel poverty and will the authority also coordinate a network of community 'warm banks' to provide heated spaces, within walking distance, for those most in need?

A written response to the question had been provided by Public Health as follows and would be circulated to the resident and all Members of the Committee for information:-



Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council shares the concern regarding the impact of fuel poverty on our population. We are working in partnership with other agencies, including health and the community and voluntary sector to mitigate poverty in our borough. This includes coordination of the Warm Homes scheme, distribution of the government's Household Support Fund and funding for services to support people experiencing poverty. Local support which people can access without referral are available on our website <https://www.dudley.gov.uk/council-community/cost-of-living/>

We are working with Dudley Council for Voluntary Services (CVS) who are coordinating a network of Warm Hubs to provide heated spaces and services for those in need. For more information on Warm Hubs please contact Kate Green at Dudley CVS on kate.green@dudleycvs.org.uk

22 **Change in order business**

Pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 13(c) it was: -

Resolved

That the order of business be varied and the agenda items be considered in the order set out in the minutes below.

23 **Food Safety and Standards in Dudley Borough**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Public Health and Wellbeing on an update on the work undertaken by the Council's Food Team in securing improvements in both food hygiene and food standards in food businesses within the Borough over the last 12 months.

The Head of Environmental Health and Trading Standards presented the report, referring Members to paragraphs of specific importance. It was highlighted that should a business not achieve the top rating of 5, an option was available for them to apply for a revisit and reassessment, however this service would be provided at an additional cost of £184.88.



It was reported that during the Covid-19 Pandemic, the Food Standards Agency (FSA) advised Local Authorities to suspend food inspection programmes, therefore the Food Team staff were reassigned to support the pandemic. Food Inspections were reinstated in July 2021, however it soon became apparent that there had been a drop in food hygiene standards in some businesses and a higher non-compliance than before the pandemic, which was also recognised nationally.

The Head of Environmental Health and Trading Standards referred to the Covid-19 Local Authority Recovery Plan issued by the FSA for the period from 1st July, 2021 to 2023/24, which provided guidance and advice on safeguards for public health and consumer protection in relation to food and the credibility of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme.

In referring to the Key Performance Indicator PI 2074 in relation to the proportion of premises in the Borough that were rated 3 or higher with food hygiene law, which a target of 90% had been set, it was reported that in 2021 only 81.06% of premises were compliant. This figure however included newly registered businesses which had not been inspected due to the cessation of inspections. In the first quarter of 2022, this figure had increased to 89.5% and it was envisaged that it would increase further, above the 90% target by the end of the year.

The impact on businesses as a result of the new requirements on allergen labelling legislation was referred to and it was confirmed that compliance of the legislation also impacted upon a premises food hygiene rating.

In response to a question raised by Councillor R Ahmed, it was confirmed that food inspection visits to premises were undertaken unannounced, with exceptions to those premises which required advance approval to attend, such as HM Prisons.

In responding to a question raised by Councillor M Hanif in relation to whether premises rated 0 were allowed to continue to trade, the Principal Environmental Health Officer stated that in instances when a premises is found to have infestations or sewage issues, immediate action would be taken to ensure the premises was closed and unable to reopen until the issue was resolved. However, closure of a premises was a complex process and Court proceedings were required. For premises rated 0-2, operators were provided with a list of actions to implement to improve their rating and further visits were undertaken by the Food Team. Should improvements continue not to be made, Legal action could be pursued.

Resolved

That the information contained in the report and provided at the meeting in relation to the work undertaken by the Council's Food Team in securing improvements in food hygiene and food standards within the Borough, be noted and supported.

24 Update Report regarding Primary Care Dental Services

A report of the Senior Commissioning Manager (Pharmacy, Optometry and Dental) NHS England was submitted to provide an update on the issues relating to dental services in the Borough.

In presenting the report, the Senior Commissioning Manager referred to the improvements that were being made to dental services and the ongoing challenges faced, in particular in relation to infection prevention control and access to services.

It was reported that since April, 2022, when the previous update was provided to the Scrutiny Committee, significant work had been undertaken to transform the NHS Dental contracts and improve access to dentistry for those patients who have a higher clinical need. Some of the proposed changes included the introduction of enhanced Units of Dental Activity; the introduction of a minimum indicative UDA charge; review of guidance and patient recalls to free up appointments; improve clinical skill mix and to regularly update the information contained on the NHS website to ensure patients were fully informed.

The Senior Commissioning Manager emphasised that dental registration had not existed since 2006 and patients were unable to register with an NHS Dentist in the same way as a General Practitioner (GP) as Dentists were commissioned to provide dental activity rather than to care for a specific group of patients. It was further reported that patients would be prioritised on their level of need, rather than check-ups being provided, although it was recommended that children were recalled between three and 12 month intervals.

The Senior Commissioning Manager advised that a small number of contractors had terminated their general dental contracts, with one provider being within the Halesowen area. However, all UDA's from that provision had been dispersed to other practises within a 1.3 mile radius of the original site.

The additional funding investment that had been secured for 2022/23, as outlined in paragraph 14 of the report was referred to.

25 **Chair's Announcement**

At this juncture, the Chair informed the Committee of the sad news of the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. As a mark of respect, the Chair requested that the meeting be closed and that the following outstanding items of business would be considered remotely by email:-

- Update Report regarding Primary Care Dental Services
- Quarterly Performance Report – Quarter 1 (1st April – 30th June, 2022)
- Primary Care Access
- Action Tracker and future business

The meeting ended at 6.40pm

CHAIR