



Adults and Safer City Scrutiny Panel

Minutes - 19 October 2021

Attendance

Members of the Adults and Safer City Scrutiny Panel

Cllr Qaiser Azeem
Cllr Harman Banger
Cllr Simon Bennett
Cllr Val Evans (Chair)
Cllr Stephanie Haynes
Cllr Sohail Khan (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Lynne Moran
Cllr Anwen Muston

Members of Adults and Safer City Scrutiny Panel that attended via Teams

Cllr Jacqueline Sweetman
Cllr Rashpal Kaur
Cllr Olivia Birch

Employees

Lynsey Kelly
Superintendent Simon Inglis
Hannah Pawley
Deborah Smith
Becky Wilkinson
Martin Stevens
Earl Piggott-Smith

Head of Community Safety
West Midlands Police
Community Safety Manager
Prevent and Cohesion Co-ordinator
Deputy Director Adult Services
Scrutiny Officer
Scrutiny Officer

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. *Title*

- 1 **Welcome and Introductions**
Cllr Val Evans, Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting and advised it was being live streamed to the press and public. A recording of the meeting would be available for viewing on the Council's website at a future date.
- 2 **Meeting procedures to be followed**
Cllr Evans explained the protocol to be followed during the meeting for asking questions and reminded everyone that microphones should be muted and cameras off, unless they have been invited to speak.

3 Apologies

Apologies were received from the following members of the panel:

- Cllr Rupinderjit Kaur
- Cllr Harman Banger

4 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5 Minutes of previous meeting (20 July 2021)

The panel members voted and approved the minutes of the meeting held on 20 July 2021 as being a correct record.

6 Safer Wolverhampton Partnership Board - update

The Chair invited Hannah Pawley, Community Safety Manager, Lynsey Kelly, Head of Communities, and Superintendent Simon Inglis, West Midlands Police to present their report.

The Head of Communities explained that the Safer Wolverhampton Partnership (SWP) Board annual report was being presented to members of the scrutiny panel for information and comment on current activity. The Head of Communities outlined the key priorities of the SWP Board and explained that the presentation would focus particularly on the issue of domestic violence.

The Head of Communities added that the panel members were also being asked to comment specifically on current activity in this area. The Head of Communities invited Deborah Smith, Prevent and Cohesion Co-ordinator to give the panel an update on changes to the Channel Duty Guidance as requested by the panel before the presentation.

The Prevent and Cohesion Co-ordinator advised the panel that new Government guidance was published in November 2020 to members of Channel Panel and partners on the duty in the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 to provide support for people vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism.

The guidance placed an emphasis on the statutory nature of the Channel Panel and gave the Chair and the Deputy Chair of SWP Board a higher level of security clearance. The guidance requires that an assurance statement is published to comply with the Act. The information will be included as part of the self-assessment, which is a baseline for the local authority practice. The new guidance focuses on achieving greater compliance in the way the Channel Panels operate across the region with the aim of being consistent in terms of practice and the training provided.

The Prevent and Cohesion Co-ordinator advised the panel that the assurance statement was signed by the Chief Executive, Tim Johnson, and sent to Homeland Security.

The panel thanked the Prevent and Cohesion Co-ordinator for the presentation and agreed to note the report.

The Community Safety Manager advised the panel that the rest of presentation would focus on the response of SWP Board to the issue of domestic abuse particularly throughout the pandemic. The Community Safety Manager gave a summary of recorded domestic abuse incidents between April 2017- March 2021 and invited Superintendent Simon Inglis to give further details.

Superintendent Inglis commented on the factors which have contributed to the increase in the number of reported domestic abuse incidents mainly against women, but also against men, for example, the national lockdown and loss of employment leading to families struggling financially.

Superintendent Inglis added that in response to the increase in number of incidents a decision was taken to analyse the integrity of the data to better understand the issue. A review was also undertaken into the way crime incidents were recorded across the West Midlands region and it was concluded that offences of harassment and stalking had either been under reported, or under recorded within the overall figures for domestic abuse incidents.

Superintendent Inglis outlined a review of the current multi-agency governance arrangements in response to the increase in domestic abuse incidents and the specific actions linked to the development of a needs assessment that will steer future commissioning plans. Superintendent Inglis updated the panel on activities linked to key themes identified from the review.

The Community Safety Manager gave details of plans informed by learning during the pandemic at the strategic level and through engagement with victims and specialist support services and the partnerships which have been developed during this period.

The Community Safety Manager advised the panel that the Interpersonal Violence Strategy will be refreshed in March 2022 and aligned to the other strategies, for the example, Tackling Violence and Exploitation Strategy.

Superintendent Inglis commented on the impact of the kidnap, rape, and murder of Sarah Everard and the resulting wider public concerns about the safety and protection of women, particularly in public spaces, and the level of the trust in the police to protect women.

Superintendent Inglis advised the panel that in response to this and increased public scrutiny of police behaviour a public survey was commissioned to better understand the views of women about safety in public spaces, within their own home and the local community. In addition, an internal survey has been commissioned of police officers to understand the culture within the service and the behaviours and attitudes towards female police officers that may make them feel uncomfortable in the workplace. The survey findings can be shared with the panel at a future meeting.

Superintendent Inglis commented on the slide in the presentation which gave an overview of the governance structure and highlighted the importance of delivering tangible outputs and of adopting a public health approach to tackling violence against women.

Superintendent Inglis also highlighted the importance of early preventative work with young people and offering support when they start to develop violent tendencies.

Superintendent Inglis commented on the range of issues linked to supporting behaviour changes and the challenges to making progress, and the need to have the measures in place that can offer help in this situation; like that offered to young people who have issues with alcohol.

The Community Safety Manager briefed the panel about the work being done with specific agencies around city on the violence prevention offer, and gave examples of current and future work, such as the mapping of services to identify gaps where targeted interventions could be the most effective. The work will be co-ordinated through the Safer Wolverhampton Partnership Board working closely with members of the Health and Wellbeing Together Board. The Community Safety Manager briefed the panel on the future plans and proposals for achieving the priorities of the SWP Board.

The Community Safety Manager offered to report on progress against actions in the presentation to a future meeting of the panel.

The panel were invited to comment on the presentation.

The panel thanked Superintendent Inglis for the presentation and issues highlighted. The panel welcomed the planned survey and the opportunity to review the findings at a future meeting.

The panel agreed with the views of the need to focus efforts on the behaviours of young people in Year 12 now some of whom are likely to be domestic violence perpetrators in the future. The panel commented on the need to do as much as possible to break the cycle of violence.

Superintendent Inglis in response commented on the importance of both men and women in the police taking part in the survey in recognition of the need to get a better overall view of the issue. Superintendent Inglis reiterated his previous point about the need to focus on the changing behaviours of future generations and highlighted the challenge in getting a focus on perpetrators and securing funding to support such work. Superintendent Inglis highlighted an example of a discussion with police colleagues in Leicester who have a three-stage programme for perpetrators, and funding is being sought to introduce a similar scheme to the area.

The panel discussed a similar campaign aimed at sex offenders and the challenge in getting people to admit to this behaviour as part of the programme.

The panel queried the definition of the term domestic abuse non-crime in the presentation. Superintendent Inglis gave an example of situation, where someone reports an argument incident to what they consider to be domestic abuse. The term 'domestic abuse' is an umbrella term which covers violence, coercive or controlling behaviour. In a situation when there has been an argument, which is not considered to be a criminal offence, but if there is evidence of coercive controlling behaviour then this would be classified as a domestic abuse 'non crime' incident.

This is based on the understanding that this incident is not part of previous stalking or continued harassment complaints. In this situation, the matter would be referred to the local neighbourhood policing teams to offer support and follow up as interventions are needed. The importance of accurately recording the data was highlighted.

The panel queried if the presenters were confident that the priorities could be achieved in terms of tackling interpersonal violence against women and girls based on the total grant allocation of £150,000 for specific projects referred to in the report and requested more information about the overall funding situation.

The Community Safety Manager added that there has been an increase in terms of reports of domestic abuse year on year since April 2017 and during last year there has been more non-crime incidents of this type reported. The reason for the increase may be due to increased awareness of domestic abuse generally and of offences such as coercive and controlling behaviour, which might not have been recognised as such in the past but is now included in the statistics.

The Community Safety Manager advised the panel that the funding of £150,000 from the Police and Crime Commissioners Office is ring fenced for SWP Board to fund specific interventions to support its priorities. The role of the Board is to co-ordinate current activity of the agencies represented to ensure the best use is being made of the collective resources. Most of the funding for domestic abuse provision in the city is provided by Public Health. The Community Safety Manager agreed to share a breakdown with the panel of the total funding available to support the delivery of the priorities detailed in the report.

The panel expressed concerns about the impact locally due to the reduction of policing numbers over the years at a time when the need for support has increased, specifically in cases involving domestic violence. Supt Inglis offered the panel reassurance about work being done to make best use of the policing resources available, the plans for increasing policing numbers in the next two to three years and commented that extra funding can sometimes have the effect of stifling creativity in finding solutions.

The panel wanted further clarification about how a non-crime incident is reported either against a person or property, the circumstances where further action would be taken, or the matter escalated to a crime incident. The panel were concerned that a non-crime report against a person could affect their future employment prospects.

Supt. Inglis advised the panel that no one would be prosecuted or have a criminal record for a non-crime incident and explained the purpose of recording it. Supt Inglis added that information about such incident would be used to add to intelligence about a person or venue and inform future police action. Supt Inglis commented on the value of recording an incident as a non-crime incident to the wider community and avoiding disaffection towards the police.

The panel discussed the guidance issued to police to help them decide if an incident should be recorded as a non-crime or crime incident. Supt Inglis reassured the panel about work done to ensure police officers comply with the law when deciding if the threshold for action has been met. Supt. Inglis added that non-crime incidents are

used as an intelligence gathering tool to allow the police to understand trends in locations or individuals which may be unknown to them.

The panel discussed the value of having strategies, linked action plans and good governance arrangements and the importance of co-ordinated activity in this area. The panel highlighted the sharp increases in the levels of domestic abuse, the reduction in the level of services to meet the need and more generally concern about women being unsafe on the streets. The panel welcomed the focus in the strategy on training and preventative work being done in schools to educate young children in Year 12. The panel suggested that such work needed to start much earlier with very young children who may have witnessed domestic abuse within their households to talk about what a healthy and trusting relationship looks like.

The panel queried the reference in the reports to incidents of domestic violence involving men, while accepting this is true considered it was important to acknowledge that these figures represent a small percentage of the total, and most cases involve women. The panel suggested that such statements should be qualified to reflect the situation where most harm is caused.

Supt Inglis explained the reasons for targeting young people in the 16 to 17 age group where they are being violent towards the partners, within Wolverhampton and the West Midlands and gave examples of the range of programmes to address the concerns from the panel. Supt Inglis gave examples of the preventative work aimed at changing behaviours of younger children and work with schools.

The Community Safety Manager offered further reassurance about the presentation of data relating to domestic violence and fully acknowledged that women are largely the victims, and this will be reflected in the investment plans and the priorities. The Community Safety Manager commented on the need to also offer support to men who may be victims of abuse. The Community Safety Manager commented that members of SWP Board takes a whole life course approach to the issue of domestic violence when looking at the timing of interventions.

The panel supported the view of the importance of agencies intervening as early as possible if children witness or are involved in domestic violence incidents. Supt Inglis commented about the changes in the approach of the police towards looking into the welfare of children in this situation and offered reassurance about the checks done by police, for example, talking to children and taking action as appropriate.

The panel commented on reference in a recent report on violence against women and girls by LGIU which states that in the UK is killed by a man every three days, a figure that has remained unchanged for a decade, with most victims killed by current or former partner.

The panel suggested that the findings and recommendations in the paper should be considered by SWP Board and incorporated into their plans.

Resolved.

1. The panel agreed to note the report and presentation findings.
2. The panel comments on the Safer Wolverhampton Partnership (SWP) Board annual report to be considered by the SWP Board.

3. The SWP Board to consider and respond to the findings and recommendations from LGIU briefing paper -Violence against women and girls – report of HM Inspectorate of Constabulary.
4. The Head of Communities to provide details of the annual funding programme for SWP Board.
5. Supt Inglis to update the panel on the findings from the consultation on safety to a future meeting.
6. The Community Safety Manager offered to report on progress against actions in the presentation to a future meeting of the panel.

7 **Mandatory Vaccinations for Social Care Homes - update presentation**

The Chair invited Becky Wilkinson, Deputy Director of Adult Services to present the report.

The Deputy Director gave an overview of the background to the updated report on the implementation of the mandatory vaccination policy. The policy covers all CQC registered care homes and include anyone employed or in a voluntary position entering a care home. The policy will become law on 11 November 2021 and be monitored by the CQC, as the regulatory body. All registered managers within a care setting will then have a legal duty to prevent any scheduled admission to anyone who is not vaccinated.

The Deputy Director outline the work done to prepare for the policy and advised that 46 people in Adult Social Care were not vaccinated and in post requiring a double vaccination from 11 November 2021 based on recent data. The Deputy Director gave an update on vaccination rates for the following centres Bradley Resource Centre, Duke Street Bungalows, and the Ernest Bold where a small number of the employees have not yet been vaccinated but was confident that the shifts can be covered in the future. The Deputy Director reassured the panel that risk assessments at the establishments have been done to confirm that the required level of service needed can be provided and gave details of specific action planned.

The Deputy Director advised the panel that 401 employees have been identified as a requiring vaccination but have refused the offer will be contacted again to encourage them to do so.

The Deputy Director advised that the Council is awaiting detailed guidance from either the NHS or LGA on the managing the process and how it relates to the vaccination requirements for ancillary staff and contractors who will also need to go into care homes, for example, for maintenance workers. The issue is being discussed with colleagues and a list of people who may be affected is being prepared. The Deputy Director advised the panel that contractors and Heads of Service have been made aware that all employees and ancillary workers that work with Adult Social Care must be fully vaccinated by 11 November 2021 and that no unvaccinated employees will be deployed in care homes after this date.

The Deputy Director advised the panel that in terms of commissioned care homes there are estimated to be over 130 staff not yet vaccinated, which equates to 95 per cent of all staff who have been vaccinated. The Deputy Director added that those people unvaccinated would not be able to meet the deadline of being double vaccinated by 11 November 2021 and work is being done on risk assessments about

how the situation will be managed and how they can be redeployed to other service areas.

The Deputy Director advised the panel of the work being done with commissioned care homes which are at greatest risk, 18 out of 71 care homes providers have expressed concerns about future staffing levels due to employee recruitment and retention issues because of the mandatory vaccination policy.

The Deputy Director detailed the support being offered to care home providers to manage the financial and other risks in this situation and reassured the panel that there is regular contact with them to monitor developments and offer support to manage and reduce the risk.

The Deputy Director gave details of commissioned care employees vaccination rates and currently of 2293 eligible staff, 2092 have had first dose and 1951 have been double doses. In terms of residents there are 1534 eligible for vaccination, 1506 have had their first vaccination and 1454 have had both doses.

The Deputy Director advised the panel of the work done to consult with unvaccinated employees jointly with colleagues in HR to consider different options, each case will be reviewed on an individual basis and the Council is not seeking to dismiss people. This option would be a last resort after the offer of redeployment is considered and other support is developed. The Deputy Director added that efforts are being made to understand the reasons why some care workers do not want to be vaccinated and accepting that people have been given a right to choose.

The Deputy Director advised the panel that in terms new starters job adverts have been reviewed to check that they comply with legal and HR advice about the need to be double vaccinated. As part of pre-employment enquiries, a check will be made about a new starters vaccination status before they start work. The Deputy Director commented on how the recording and storage of vaccination status data would be maintained and that the system has been developed to also record data on booster vaccination and the flu vaccination if required in the future.

The Deputy Director advised the panel of the work being done in liaison with Yoo Recruit to make sure the same communication messages that have gone to care workers has also gone to agency workers to make clear the vaccination requirements. In addition, care home providers have been advised by Public Health that current testing arrangements, even when vaccination rates are at 100% vaccination, will still be required.

The Deputy Director commented that the introduction of the mandatory vaccination is happening at a time when the social care sector is in a fragile financial position nationally and the service is experiencing an increase in home care demand, which is not currently subject to the mandatory vaccination policy.

The Deputy Director advised the panel that the national consultation on extending mandatory vaccination policy to other groups ends on 22 November 2021, and there could further implications for the social care sector as a result. There is evidence of significant numbers of beds been available in residential care sector as people are choosing homecare, if they can, as alternative to residential care, which presents several challenges to the sector.

The Deputy Director outlined the work being done to adopt a standardised approach towards implementing the national Government guidance with neighbouring authorities across the West Midlands region.

Across the region 3764 employees are unvaccinated and there has been a surge in the rate of vaccinations in recent weeks. The target of 100 per cent vaccination rate for Wolverhampton will not be achieved by 11 November 2021 deadline.

The Deputy Director commented on other challenges facing the social care sector, for example, the employee turnover rate of 27 percent, which means that there are 687 vacancies in Wolverhampton. The policy of mandatory vaccinations for social care staff working in care homes is, despite the recruitment and recruitment challenges, considered to be the correct approach and efforts will continue to support employees to get vaccinated.

The panel were invited to comment on the report.

The panel thanked the Deputy Director for the presentation. The panel discussed the challenges facing the social care sector despite the extra planned national funding and suggested the issue should be investigated the issue as a matter of urgency to better understand the issues. The review should specifically cover the issue of the recruitment and retention of social care workers.

The panel were advised by the Chair that a future briefing meeting of the panel planned for 6 December 2021 could also consider the issue. The panel agreed that this should be a formal meeting of the panel rather than a briefing to consider the matter further. The Deputy Director supported the proposal.

The panel discussed the idea of a scrutiny review of the topic and suggested that this option should also be considered.

The panel queried the process for recording when an employee has had a booster vaccination. The Deputy Director advised the panel that the mandatory vaccine policy has not been extended to include booster vaccinations, but work is ongoing with CCG to prepare for this to be done if this agreed.

The panel queried where information about which care, or residential homes have achieved 100 per cent vaccination status for their employees would be available and how it would be promoted to the public. The Deputy Director advised the panel that the CQC as the regulator would be publishing details about the vaccination status of individual care homes. The CQC will have power to act where this target has not been reached, but the approach will firstly be to understand the risk assessments of the care home and their ability to provide safe levels of care. The Deputy Director agreed to check when the information will be published and available to the public.

The panel expressed concern about the future use by the Council of care homes where 100 per cent of care staff have not been vaccinated or there are staff shortages, given its responsibilities to protect the welfare of residents. The panel also queried the contingency plans for managing this situation. The Deputy Director advised the panel that the Council have a duty of care to residents as detailed in Care Act and a legal duty and cannot act outside the law. The Deputy Director added that the Council's intention would be safely place people in care homes with vaccinated employees and providers have been asked to review their business

continuity plans and confirm that they can provide 100 per cent vaccinated teams from the 11 November 2021 to comply with the law.

The panel discussed the issues in persuading people who have refused the offer of vaccination and the risk of dismissal can be avoided by accepting redeployment as alternative.

The panel expressed concern about people choosing home care as an alternative to residential care and being supported by people who may not be double vaccinated and suggested there was a need for standardisation. The panel supported the view that people providing care to someone who is frail or vulnerable people should be double vaccinated to reduce the level of risk to them and the wider community.

The Deputy Director supported this view and commented that across the West Midlands it has been calculated that 30 per cent of homecare workers have not yet been vaccinated. The panel were advised that the current consultation on changes to the requirement for mandatory vaccinations could be extended to include this group and other frontline social care and health workers.

The panel queried the Council's contingency plans for those care homes who do not meet the requirement to have 100 per cent of workers double vaccinated by 11 November 2021.

The Deputy Director advised the panel of preparation being work with colleagues in HR in advance of the deadline and added that the focus was on offering support to people who have decided not to get vaccinated, while recognising that there are people in specific circumstance, for example, workers who are pregnant and concerned about the implications for them.

The Deputy Director reminded the panel of the next steps detailed in the presentation and the timeline for key dates. A report will be presented to Strategic Executive Board next week with details of final numbers of workers who are unvaccinated and a proposed plan with options for the future to comply with the law. The Deputy Director reiterated the previous commitment to work with every employee affected and to explore all possible options, while acknowledging that the opportunities to re employ employees elsewhere will be limited and there is acceptance that some may leave at the end of the process.

The panel expressed concern about the policy of care homes asking relatives to take a resident to a hospital appointment during a lockdown in response to a case of Covid 19. The Deputy Director agreed to investigate further the practice and policy of transferring residents from a care home in lockdown and discuss the case with colleagues in infection control and advise the panel.

The panel thanked the presenter for the report.

Resolved:

1. The Deputy Director to share a copy of the national guidance on implementation of the mandatory vaccination policy for ancillary staff and contractors with the panel.
2. The Deputy Director provide details when CQC will be publishing data on the vaccination status of residential and care homes.

3. The Deputy Director to advise on the policy of care residents from a home in lockdown due to Covid 19 attending hospital appointments with a relative.
4. The Deputy Director to provide an update on the number of unvaccinated people in post after the deadline of 11 November 2021.
5. The panel agreed that the proposed briefing meeting proposed for w/c 6.12.21 should be changed to the formal scheduled meeting to consider the challenges facing providers of care and residential care accommodation.

8 **Adults and Safer City Scrutiny Panel 2021- 2022 Draft Work Programme**

The Chair invited Earl Piggott- Smith, Scrutiny Officer, to present the report. The Scrutiny Officer advised the panel of items scheduled for the work programme and invited members to comment on the plans.

The Scrutiny Officer suggested that a further progress report on the mandatory vaccination policy and the implementation be added to the work programme.

The panel discussed the issue of social care market and the specific challenges facing the sector be considered at a formal meeting rather than a briefing session, as originally planned.

The panel discussed the issue of violent crime and councillor safety and suggested that this should be added as a future item for the work programme. The panel wanted to review the safety measures that could be put in place to make sure Councillors were as safe as possible.

The Deputy Director advised that the panel the new CQC regulation for adult social care will be introduced in April 2022 and suggested this could be added to the work programme.

Resolved

1. The panel agreed to note the report and agreed the suggested to the changes to the work programme.
2. The panel work programme to be amended to change the briefing meeting on social care sector to a formal meeting.