



directors of  
**adass**  
adult social services  
West Midlands

# Drawing on Direct Payments Webinar

## Challenges & Opportunities

Monday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2024

12:30 – 14:30



# WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

## WEST MIDLANDS ADASS DIRECT PAYMENTS NETWORK CO-CHAIRS



David Drayton-Green

Direct Payments Service Manager, City of Wolverhampton Council

Alistair Egginton

Direct Payments Lead, Coventry City Council





*“Striving to have the best regional improvement programme in England”*



# WELCOME!

- West Midlands ADASS Direct Payments Network
- Informal approach to continual improvement

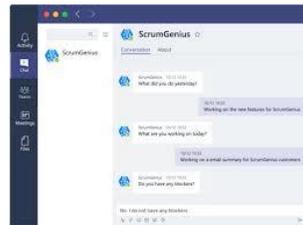
# OPENING & HOUSEKEEPING

## PLEASE:

- Microphone / Video switched OFF



- CHAT – please use CHAT for questions / comments



# What space are we in?





# 1C2A Proportion of people using social care who received direct payments (2022/23 data)



## Local Authority ASCOF map

Select a measure, council and grouping to view councils alongside their region or peer group. For more details of peer groups see the Contents page.

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Peer Group

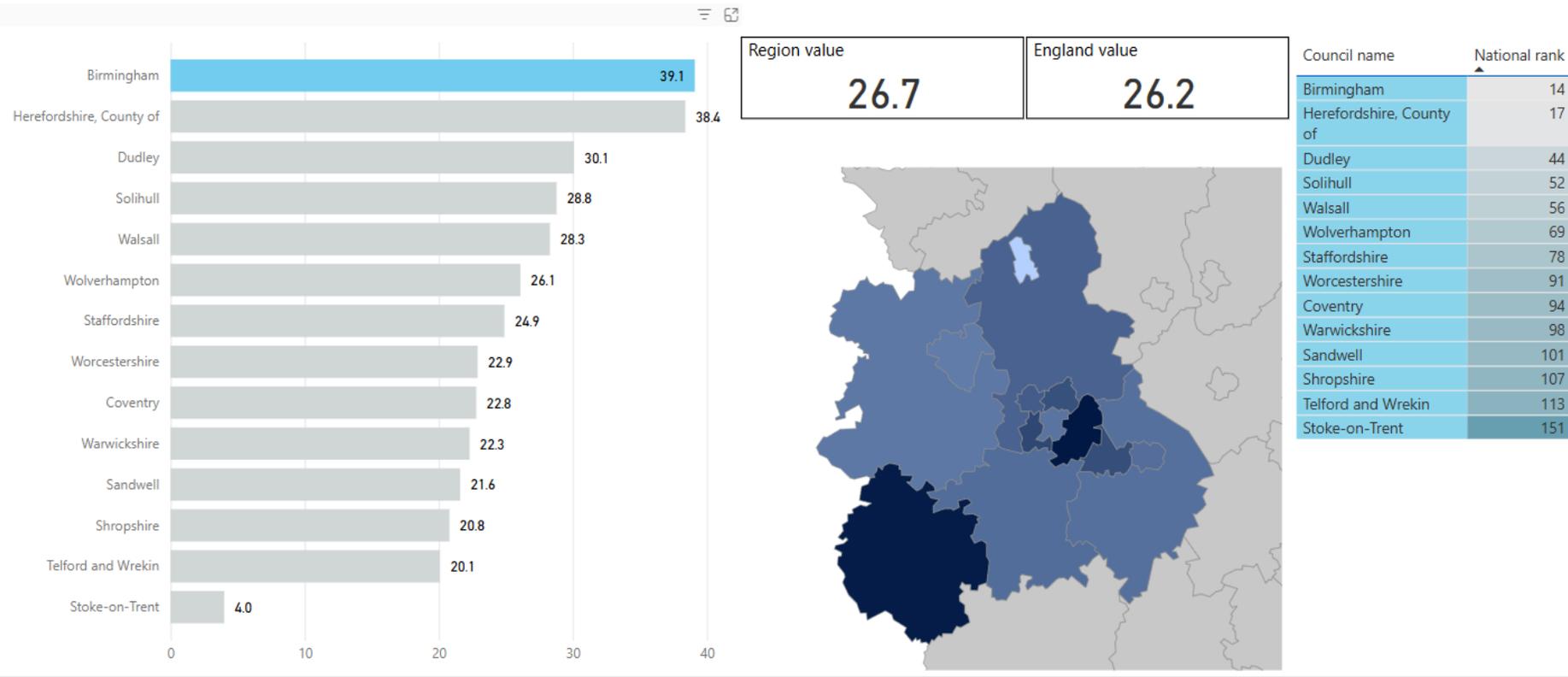
Region

Select an ASCOF measure

1C2A: Proportion of people using social care who receive direct payments

Select a council

Birmingham





# 1C2B Proportion of Carers who receive direct payments (2022/23 data)



## Local Authority ASCOF map

Select a measure, council and grouping to view councils alongside their region or peer group. For more details of peer groups see the Contents page.

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Peer Group

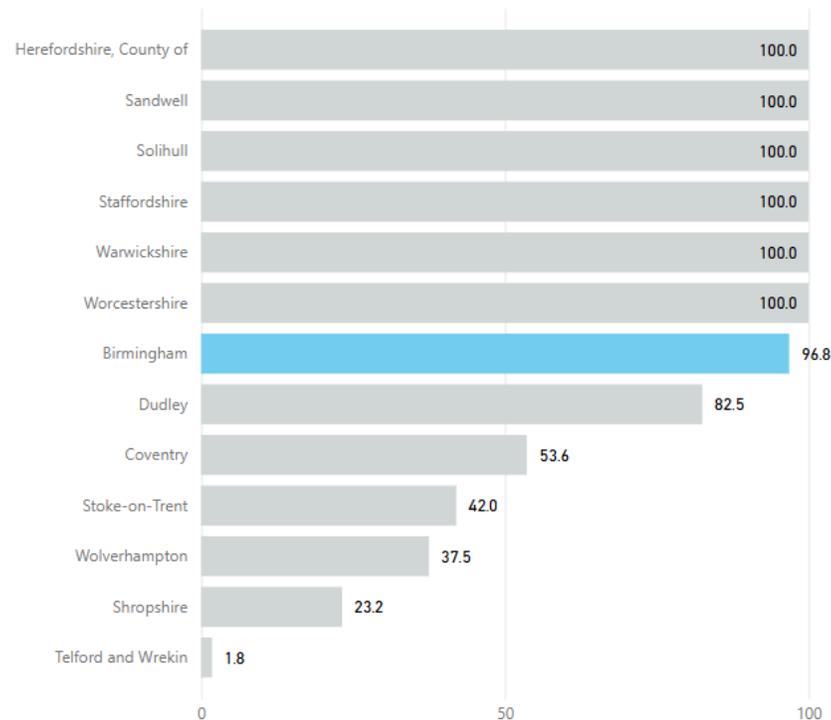
Region

Select an ASCOF measure

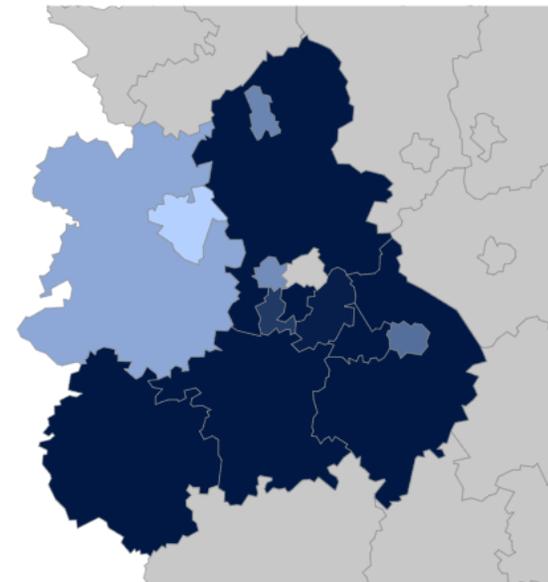
1C2B: Proportion of carers who receive direct payments

Select a council

Birmingham



Region value	England value
<b>77.9</b>	<b>76.8</b>



Council name	National rank
Herefordshire, County of	1
Sandwell	1
Solihull	1
Staffordshire	1
Warwickshire	1
Worcestershire	1
Birmingham	87
Dudley	99
Coventry	118
Stoke-on-Trent	126
Wolverhampton	132
Shropshire	141
Telford and Wrekin	150

# AIMS

- *share experience and perspectives of people with lived experience, informal carers, practitioners, DP leads*
- *highlight operational challenges for solution and reflect on strategic opportunities*



*“Striving to have the best regional improvement programme in England”*



## *Reimagining Direct Payments: Supporting Glorious Ordinary Lives – Making it Real*

**Dr Clenton Farquharson CBE**

Chair - Think Local Act Personal programme board



# Experiencing DPs I – VIDEO

*The person drawing on support, informal carers and Personal Assistants*

***Grace Currie, Lorraine Currie, Netty Brook and  
Shannon Whitehouse***

It's  
Grace's  
world  
and  
we're  
living  
in it





# Experiencing direct payments II – Practitioner perspectives

*Paige Westwood and Penny Wilcox  
Warwickshire CC*



# Direct payments and pre-paid cards

***Chris Roberts , Shropshire Council***

***David Drayton-Green, Wolverhampton Council***

## Wolverhampton Council use DPs for several reasons, inc:

- a **secure** way to make payments and keep funds safe
- are **convenient** and **easy to use** and can be accessed online or by phone
- can **reduce** Council processing costs
- **eliminate** the need to send paperwork; bank statements, receipts, invoices, etc
- **managed** by the cardholder or with the help of a trusted person.
- gives **control** to the individual.
- used to **access** a wider range of services and products
- also **restrict** what can be purchased
- allow you to spend the only the amount of money stored on the card
- easy **recovery** of excess funds
- provide **transparent** audit trail

## Shropshire Council offers choice. DP recipients can choose a high street bank, but they are encouraged to use the local Just Credit Union (JCU)

- This approach is to offer choice and control over how DP funds are administered
- An increasing number of people are choosing to open a Just Credit Union account
- The account holder or a nominated / authorised person manages the account and a team of 6 staff in the Just Credit Union support and **make payments on behalf** of the account holder. The account holder can phone the JCU or email them
- The payroll providers calculate the pay, pension and tax due and instruct the JCU to pay on behalf of the clients
- Next month will see the introduction of an online platform to view the account balance and statements
- An App will be released early 2025 for easy access to the balance and statements on mobiles and tablets and will prompt when invoices are due payment

- Many of the benefits of a Just Credit Union account are the same as a prepaid card account:
- **reduces** Council processing costs
- **eliminates** the need to send paperwork, bank statements, receipts, invoices etc
- risk of **fraud is greatly reduced**, because only payees who have been authorised on the account can be paid
- easy **recovery** of excess funds
- provides **transparent** audit trail

One of the drawbacks of having a prepaid card account in my opinion, is when a Council wants to switch prepaid card providers. This maybe because a contract has come to an end, or there is a better product or provider on the market. There is a lot of work and time involved, and it can cause stress and anxiety to the DP customers.



# Direct payments - monitoring and outcomes – what works?

***Veronica Greenhouse***  
***Hoople Group, Herefordshire***

Direct Payments  
What does outcome  
based monitoring look  
like?

## INTRODUCTION

Veronica Greenhouse – Direct payment officer (Hoople Ltd)



**The introduction of direct payments in the late 90's marked a real step towards enabling disabled people to establish real choice, control and independence in their care environment, and in their lives as a whole.**

**From idealistic and optimistic beginnings, it feels in many places like we have drifted into a world:**

- where direct payments cease to be a route to independence, and rather have become just one alternative way of 'delivering care'.
- where improvisation and flexibility have been replaced by narrow rules and restrictions.
- where light touch has been replaced by deeply intrusive monitoring.

Herefordshire Council currently has a direct payment take up of 35.6%

Herefordshire Council does use outcome based, person centred approach to support planning.

Despite this, Direct payments in Herefordshire still feel prescriptive.



Statutory guidance

## Care and support statutory guidance

Updated 27 September 2024

12.4 For direct payments to have the maximum impact, the processes involved in administering and monitoring the payment should incorporate the minimal elements to allow the local authority to fulfil its statutory responsibilities.

- These processes must not restrict choice or stifle innovation by requiring that the adult's needs are met by a particular provider
- Must not place undue burdens on people to provide information to the local authority.
- An effective monitoring process should also go beyond financial monitoring, and include aspects such as identifying wider risks and issues, for example non-payment of tax, and provision of employers' liability insurance where this is appropriate.

What does best practice for outcome led direct payment monitoring look like?

How do we meet the audit requirements of our local authority?

How do we prevent misuse of the direct payment?

How do we know if spend has met someone's outcomes?



# Increasing the use of direct payments

***Chris MacAdams, Birmingham City Council***



# Direct payment Uptake in Birmingham

August 2016 18.9 %

August 2017 22.7 %

August 2018 26.6 %

August 2019 32.2 %

August 2020 37.7 %

August 2021 38.3 %

June 2022 38.6 %

September 2024 37.4%

03 September 2024 - unchanged from 37.4% in August 2024. 3296 people currently have a Direct Payment, compared to 3299 last year. An additional 50 payments would be required to reach 38%.



# How has this been achieved?

- Corporate Director for Adult Social Care lead on DP's - “DPs is everybody's business”.
- DP Project Board established - aimed to reach initial target of 30% and then 'stretch' target of 40%.
- It took longer than expected to get to 30% - the closer you get, the harder it gets!
- DP uptake work needs to be revisited - refinements / refresher training needed for the target of 40% to be achieved.



# Where are we?

Direct Payments were offered in all instances apart from:

- funding permanent residential or nursing care
- employing a family member as a carer who lives within the same household
- purchasing Council in-house services

Reasons for not taking Direct Payment:

- conversation is happening at a time of crisis, citizen and carers not wanting to engage in any dialogue other than how care and supported is to be delivered
- citizen and or carer do not want the 'hassle' of managing a DP
- expectation that the Council should be arranging everything for them
- the citizen lacks capacity to agree to DP arrangements

There was a sense that social workers were 'avoiding' DP's, thought they were too complicated, and it was easier to direct the citizen to a commissioned service.



# How we increased from 20% to 38% .....

- DP project board established
- Corporate Director for Adult Social Care as Chair
- Project board included social work team managers and practitioners, analytical support, client financial services lead, commissioning lead, learning and development lead, communications and procedures leads and a minimum of two citizen representatives
- Key message that “Direct Payments is everybody’s business” with a “top down, bottom up” approach
- Engagement with cabinet members, ensuring that they supported and promoted the vision
- Development of a robust communications plan
- Strengthening working relationships within and between Client Financial Services, Social Work teams & Health
- Workforce development programme
- Aston University carried out ‘Exploratory research on the Barriers to and Enablers of Direct Payments among older people in Birmingham’
- Individual targets set for each social work team based on the profile of the citizens the team was working with and the ability to convert to Direct Payments



# How we increased from 20% to 38% .....

- Weekly reports (which continue to this day) showing Direct Payment uptake in each team
- Creation of a Direct Payment Support Services Framework as at 01 July 2016
- Commencement of a Pre-Paid Card contract as at 01 July 2016
- Creation of an animated video showing the benefits of Pre-Paid Cards
- Creation of a Direct Payments Policy Statement
- Review and update of the fourteen Direct Payment factsheets
- Detailed information on the Direct Payment Support Service providers explaining who they are, how they work and what they do
- Review and update of all the forms associated with the Direct Payment process
- Review and update of the Direct Payments procedures
- Creation of Direct Payment process maps with accompanying guidance notes so that officers are able to fully understand the process
- All factsheets, forms, processes, procedures reviewed and revised are held in one place (within the Council's intranet) – message to staff is to do not download and save on your own hard drives, these are 'live' documents that could be subject to update



# Workforce development programme

- Key message to get across to workers..... “it is no more difficult to set up a Direct Payment than it is to arrange a Commissioned package of care”.
- The Council’s internal Learning and Development Service developed an extensive training programme; and this was under the banner of “the pursuit of confidence” and was aligned to “you said, we did” feedback from citizens; we wanted all workers to understand and feel confident with administering Direct Payments.
- Furthermore, sessions have also been arranged for Direct Payment recipients:
  - Introduction to Direct Payments
  - Introduction to the role of Personal Assistants
  - The Direct Payment recipient training sessions still take place and now include input from the Direct Payment Support Service providers.



# Direct Payment Support Services

- With the introduction of a Direct Payment Support Services Framework as at 01 July 2016, Birmingham City Council is now one of the most progressive Councils when it comes to giving Direct Payment Support to its citizens.
- There were three providers signed up to this Framework - Compass Disability Services (replaced upon retender by PeoplePlus Ltd), Ideal for All Ltd & The Penderels Trust Ltd
- The most difficult decision for the citizen should be choosing which Direct Payment Support provider they are to use –IFA/Penderels/PeoplePlus will then talk the citizen and carers through the process and arrange all the financial elements of the Direct Payment for them.
- The vast majority of citizens taking a Direct Payment (as the majority are employing Personal Care Assistants) will be using a Direct Payment Support Service.
- The social care workers ‘push’ the use (and ease) of using a Direct Payment Support Service, they are heavily referenced in all our guidance and literature and there is significant detail about them on the Council’s website.
- The Direct Payment Support Services contribute to Direct Payments and Personal Care Assistant training events run by The Learning and Development Service and the Direct Payment Support Service providers regularly attend social work team meetings.



# How are we promoting DPs with service users; carers and their families?

- Targeting citizens in advance of needing care is always difficult, particularly in getting them to be engaged, and is expensive.
- Facebook (Meta) and Twitter (X) and the usual social media outlets should be considered but ‘positive’ stories can sometimes be drowned out by a small number of individuals.
- Direct Payments are self-promoting, when you get citizens onto Direct Payments they and their carers will share ‘good news’ stories and as a result the positivity around Direct Payments will grow.
- As further citizens come into contact with Social Care, it is likely that they will then know someone or will be aware of someone who has had or is receiving a Direct Payment.
- Before a social work Team Manager signs off a budget application the question asked is why this individual can’t take their personal Budget in the form of a Direct Payment – making this step change is key to driving up Direct Payment numbers.
- Despite all the training it was recognised that some workers could still lack confidence or could deliberately shy away from Direct Payments – a Direct Payments Champion(s) was identified within each social work team and these colleagues became the go to persons within teams. At times the Champions need support and so networks were established to put them in touch with other Champions and this included in the establishment of a Direct Payments Champions Meeting (which has since morphed into a Direct Payments Challenge Group).



# What has helped increase Direct Payment Uptake?

- Historically, Birmingham City Council did not allow citizens to take a Direct Payment where a care agency was being used – Direct Payments was for the use of Personal Care Assistants only.
- A change to this approach (a number of years back) has seen an increase in Direct Payment numbers – this was further accelerated by the Council reducing the number of contracted Home Support providers from a figure; in excess of 120 to a number in the mid 70's (in August of 2024 the number of contracted Home Support providers has increased to 92 further to a retender).
- Whilst a citizen can remain with a Home Support provider that no longer has a contract with the Council; they can only do so by converting to a Direct Payment arrangement.



# The elephant in the room!

- Direct Payment rates – as part of a wider fair cost of care exercise, Birmingham City Council reviewed the hourly rate it would pay Direct Payment recipients where a Personal Care Assistant was being employed.
- At the time that Direct Payment uptake was being pro-actively progress, the rate was set at £10.96 per hour which we felt was very fair when we compared ourselves to other Councils; especially when you take into account that the Council covers all the costs attached to the Direct Payment Support Services and the Pre-Paid Card.
- With subsequent National Minimum Wage and National Insurance Changes the Council has reviewed this figure year on year and the rates payable are now:
- All existing Direct Payments as at 1 April 2024 increased as follows with any new Direct Payments entered into on or after 1 April 2024 being paid as follows:

Use of a personal assistant will increase by 6.35% to £13.24/hour

Use of a CQC Registered care provider will increase by 23.38% to £21.95/hour for home support; by 11.47% to £19.83/hour for supported living; and 10.79% to £19.71 for Extra Care Sheltered Housing.



# Individual Services Funds (ISFs)

- Birmingham City Council has looked to pilot ISF's but could not find a provider that was prepared to buy into the ethos and full expectations of the ISF model. As a result of this and due to Covid, further work on this area has been put on hold.
- For those Councils running ISF's it should be noted that they cannot be counted towards your Direct Payment numbers. Whilst ISF's do have the ability to empower citizens the extensive use thereof will inadvertently affect your rating in this ASCOF measure. This has been challenged previously and I daresay will be again but as it stands this should be considered when scaling up ISF numbers.



# Are we hitting the target but missing the point?

It is important to note that this isn't just about hitting targets. In the majority of instances (particularly where Personal Assistants are employed) Direct Payments will lead to better outcomes for citizens and increased choice and control.



*“Striving to have the best regional improvement programme in England”*

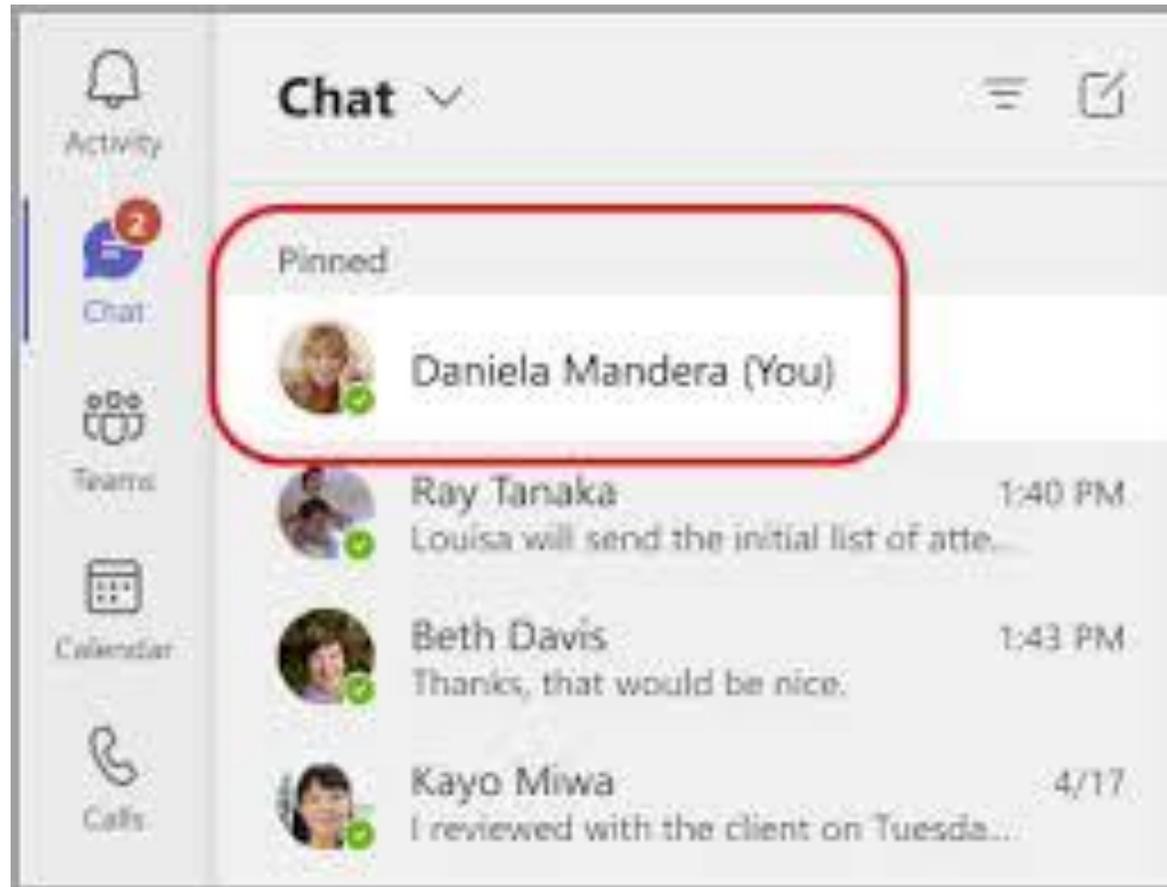
## ***Contact Details***

For further information, contact:

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[chris.macadams@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:chris.macadams@birmingham.gov.uk)

# From the “chat” – panel discussion



*Jenny Swain  
Warwickshire  
County Council*



*“Striving to have the best regional improvement programme in England”*

## FOLLOW-UP

- Thank you for attending
- Copy of slides to be shared via WM ADASS website at:  
[WMADASS \(wm-adass.org.uk\)](http://WMADASS (wm-adass.org.uk))
- Should we get together again in, say, a year's time to see what progress has been made?



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# Thank you for joining us today

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eMail us at [info@wm-adass.org.uk](mailto:info@wm-adass.org.uk)