



**healthwatch**  
Sandwell



**8**

# Activity Report

**1<sup>st</sup> July 2015 –**

**25<sup>th</sup> September 2015**

## Contents

Introduction .....	2
Issues, Actions and Outcomes.....	3
Continuing Healthcare Assessment Research .....	3
Patient Safety at Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals Trust.....	4
Other .....	5
Experience Gathering Review .....	7
Press Summary.....	10
Safeguarding Issues Raised and Action.....	11
Promotion and Engagement .....	12
Groups and Meetings Membership .....	12
Health and Social Care Group.....	13
Consultation Network .....	13
Volunteering and Enter & View.....	13
Media .....	13

NB After consideration by the Healthwatch Sandwell Board, this report and the information within can be shared publicly, except where otherwise specified by the Board.

Healthwatch Sandwell  
Walker Grange  
Central Avenue  
Tipton  
DY4 9RY  
0121 569 7210  
[www.healthwatchsandwell.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchsandwell.co.uk)  
© Healthwatch Sandwell CIC, 2015

## Introduction

Welcome to the quarterly Healthwatch Sandwell Activity Report 8. This report details the work of the team at Healthwatch Sandwell (HWS) and gives an overview of the team's findings regarding health and social care issues in Sandwell, and their other work.

HWS is an independent consumer champion that gathers and represents the public's views on health and social care services in Sandwell. It ensures that the views of the public and people who use the services are taken into account by those who commission and provide services.

This report is considered and approved by the HWS Board. The board members are:

Pam Jones (Chair)	Doug Round (Vice Chair)
Wasim Ali	John Clothier
Teresa Culverwell	Parminder Dhani
Bill Hodgetts	Kwadwo Osusu-Darko
Geoff Tranter	

HWS Team are:

Mark Guest: Chief Executive  
Lavida Fletcher: Office Manager  
Anita Andrews: Information and Research Officer  
Ian McGarry: Communication & Engagement Officer  
Tom Collins: Support Officer  
Melissa Elders: Support Officer  
Janet Foster: Support Officer  
Paul Higgett: Support Officer

We hope that you find this report informative, if you have any queries do not hesitate to contact us.

This and previous reports are available on our website:  
[www.healthwatchsandwell.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchsandwell.co.uk)

## Issues, Actions and Outcomes

### Continuing Healthcare Assessment Research

HWS carried out research into the Continuing Healthcare (CHC) assessment process as a result of being contacted by a number of people, who had experienced a CHC assessment and wanted to discuss their experiences, concerns and issues.

The final report, the Continuing Healthcare Maze, was published on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2015 alongside a press release.

The research found:

- **Poor Communication by Assessors with Service Users and Carers.**

There was a lack of explanation of the assessment process, both actual and future. Service users described not being listened to and not being understood when information was being provided to the assessor.

- **Poor Assessment Skills of the Assessor**

It was found that the assessors approach was unsatisfactory in obtaining an accurate picture of the situation.

- **Emotional Cost**

Service users and carers have experienced emotional distress from the process, which has had a negative impact on their health and well-being.

- **Poor Communication and Collaboration: Health Care Professionals and Social Workers**

The research found that service users and their carers experienced unacceptable disagreements and arguments between professionals during home visits.

- **Timescales**

Service users and their carers had to endure unacceptable timescales and uncertainty over outcomes for the assessment process.

HWS believe that these findings are unacceptable for people who are vulnerable and living with life debilitating conditions that already seriously affect the quality of their life.

The report made the following recommendations:

- Thorough review of process and resources in the assessment process

- Recognition of the personal and human cost in the assessment
- Support for service users and carers: advice and advocacy
- Support for service users and carers: enforcement of rights

The NHS Sandwell and West Birmingham Clinical Commissioning Group (SWB CCG) who are jointly responsible for the assessment process along with Sandwell MBC presented the report to their Governing Body on 2nd September 2015. They have responded by saying that during 2014/15 SWB CCG funded 1,014 CHC eligible patients and that there had been a repeat review and audit of the processes within CHC service (January 2015) which demonstrated improvements in service process and pathways.

The SWB CCG acknowledged that further improvements are to be made especially with regard to ensuring the assessment is as user friendly as possible. The CCG stated that they will continue to offer support to navigate the process and that their Time2talk team will provide expert customer care.

The research will be presented at the Health and Well Being Board on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2015.

HWS will continue to listen to patient experiences to see if they feel that this has led to improvements in the assessment process.

The final report with its findings and recommendations is available from the HWS Office or at <http://www.healthwatchesandwell.co.uk/research-and-intelligence-reports>.

## **Patient Safety at Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals Trust**

As reported in the previous Healthwatch Activity Report (7), HWS is taking a further look at patients' experience of care and safety in Sandwell Hospital. Research so far undertaken includes Support Officers visiting the Hospital and obtaining people's views on level 5.

The next stage of our research approach will involve in-depth interviews with some patients and their carers to fully understand what they have experienced. As part of this research, we will be asking patients about whether or not they made complaints and their feelings and experiences of complaints processes.

The findings will be presented in due course.

## Other

### **Walk-in Centre usage**

A re-occurring issue locally and nationally is the inability for the public to gain GP appointments in a timely manner. It has been reported to HWS that patients are visiting the walk centre in Parsonage Street, West Bromwich because of difficulties getting GP appointments. Due to the amount of these experiences being reported, HWS will be visiting the walk in centre to interview patients to find out if they are there due to this issue.

### **Non-Emergency Passenger Transport.**

NHS-funded non-emergency patient transport services help eligible patients who have a health need, and are unable to travel by private or public transport, to get to and from healthcare services. Birmingham, Sandwell and Solihull NHS trusts have consulted on providing a new universal non-emergency patient transport service, this consultation ended on 21 August 2015. It is proposed that the eligibility criteria for the new service will be amended to reduce inappropriate use of the free service.

SWB CCG have confirmed to HWS that these proposed changes do not affect Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals.

HWS will continue to monitor progress with this project.

### **Oncology in Sandwell**

University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust have given notice on the Service Level Agreement (SLA) to provide Oncologists to Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust.

Discussions are taking place to review oncology services. HWS have sought and gained assurances that patients would continue to receive care within Sandwell.

HWS will monitor this situation.

## **Complaints Handling**

Health and social care services' complaints handling has been an ongoing issue since Healthwatch Sandwell started. A further look is being undertaken within this area. This includes following up patients who have been signposted or advised by HWS. This work is ongoing.

## **G.P. - Primary Care**

At the Sandwell and Birmingham Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee HWS raised the issue that patients frequently have difficulty accessing appointments, a matter that has been regularly raised during experience gathering exercises.

HWS has suggested that the whole appointment system across GPs needs reviewing. It has also reaffirmed concern that there is a conflict of interest in that Primary Care services are being redesigned by the CCG, which is governed by primary care providers i.e. GPs.

SWB CCG are conducting a listening exercise with a view to reviewing and evaluating GP services. The aim is to hear the public's views on GP services in Sandwell and West Birmingham, including what works well and what could be further improved. The feedback will contribute to the SWB CCG five year Primary Care Strategy. The review is at a very early stage and no decisions have been taken about any of the services involved.

HWS will contribute to the Listening Exercise.

## **Conclusion of an on-going complaint at SWBHT**

HWS have been actively supporting a complainant about the care of an elderly relative at Sandwell General Hospital. The complainant has had several meetings with the Hospital and after many months the situation has now concluded and resulted in an acknowledgement of poor care. Assurances have been given that changes to practices and staffing have been made.

NB

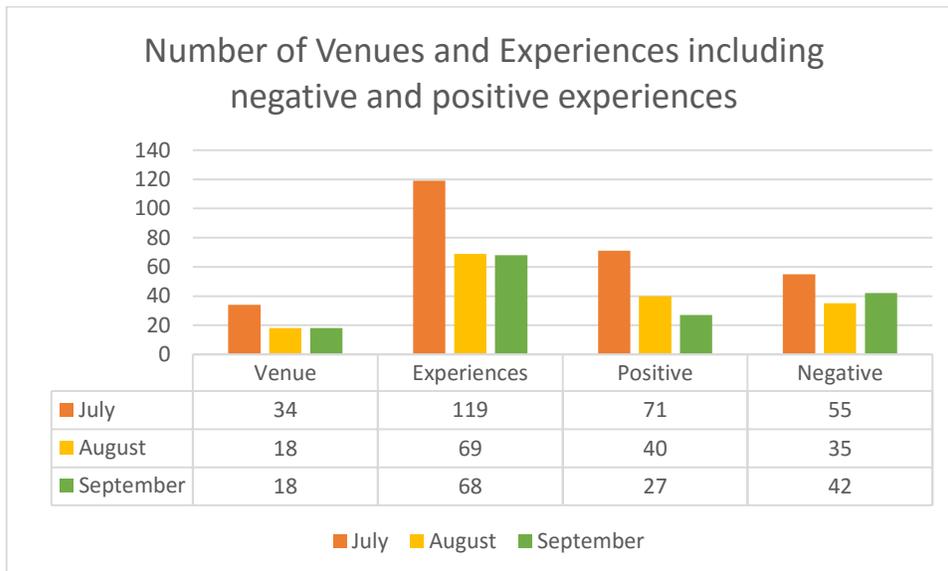
Some details have been changed or generalised for data protection and privacy purposes.

## Experience Gathering Review

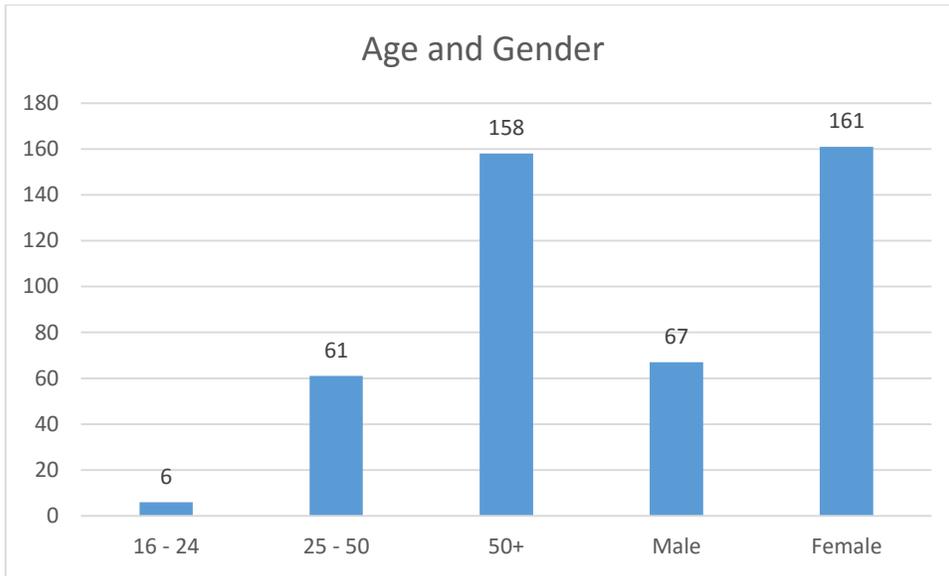
The Support Officers have continued to meet with the public to listen to their experiences of health and social care. They have visited a variety of venues, which include libraries, supermarkets, community fun days and support groups. During this period a total of 70 venues were visited and over 250 people were spoken to about their experiences.



Tom Collins (Support Officer) at Asda, Great Bridge



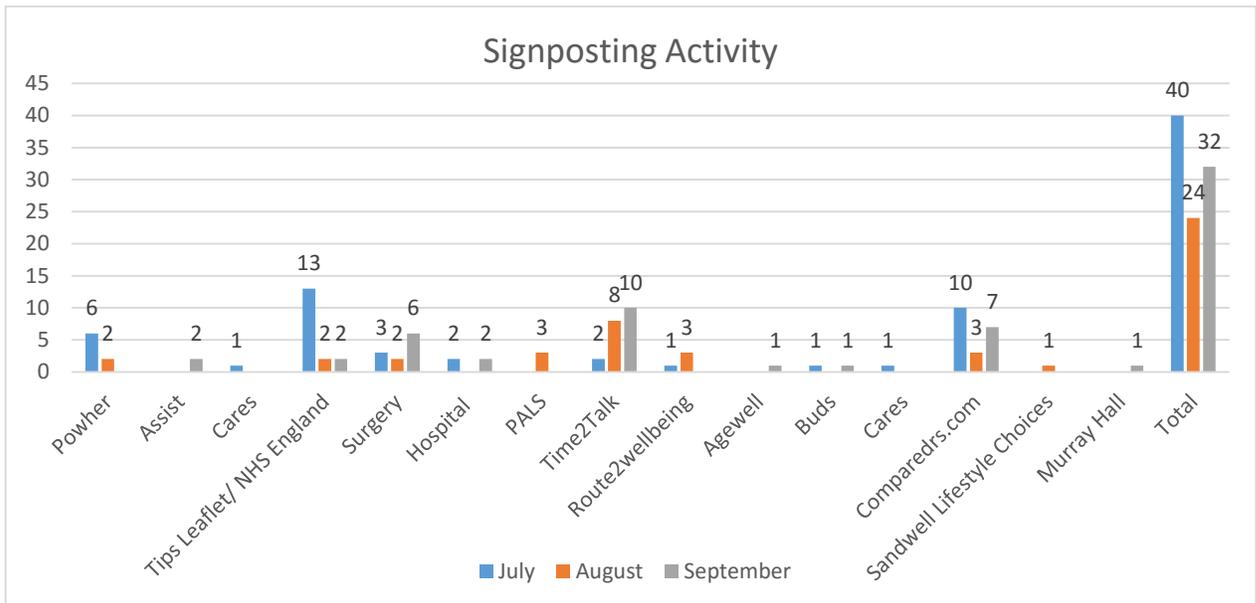
This quarter has seen an increase in positive experiences which is pleasing to note.



The Support Officers engage with all sections of the community. However the main group continue to be female aged 50+

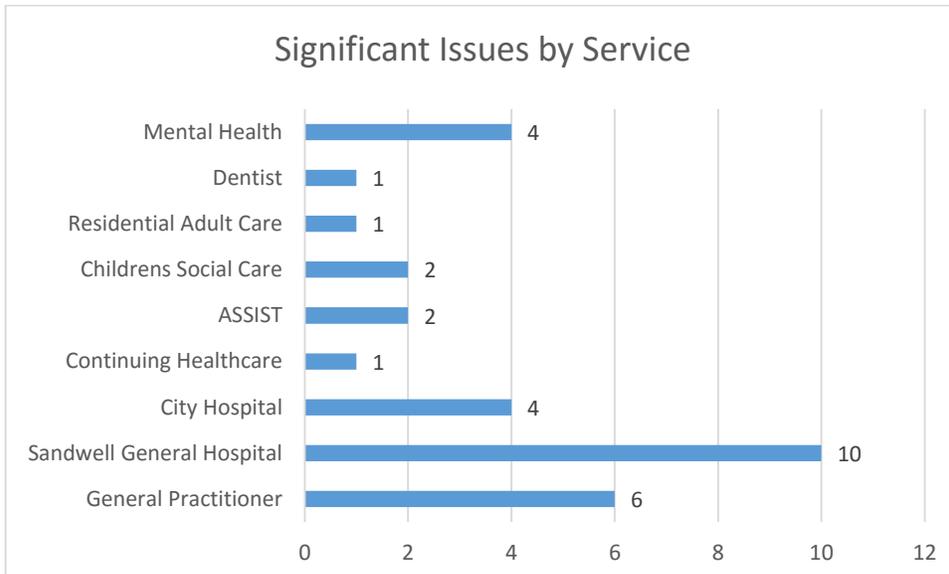
### Breakdown of Signposted activity

The Support Officers have continued to signpost the public to various places to help them with their issues



The Support Officers have continued to distribute leaflets that give information about how to make a complaint to the NHS and leaflets about Time2talk – the Customer Care and Advice service provided by the SWB CCG.

Also the public have been sign posted to our web site [www.comparedrs.com](http://www.comparedrs.com) as many issues identified relate to GP services. We also have a rolling roadshow to promote this web site to patients.



These significant issues are being followed up by HWS.

## Press Summary

The following are stories from the press that relate to Sandwell.

### **Monday 10th August 2015** **£2m centre for heart treatment**

Heart attack victims in Sandwell will be treated in a new £2 million department created at Birmingham's City Hospital from today. Two new cardiac treatment labs have opened at the hospital where cardiology in-patient services have been centralised. All emergency coronary care is being brought together at City Hospital. But the move will mean longer ambulance journeys for people in Sandwell. Hospital Trust Medical Director, Roger Steadman, said bringing cardiac care into one location was better for patients and would bring consistently high standards. SOURCE: Express and Star

### **Monday 17th August 2015**

#### **The truth about hospital parking in the West Midlands**

Hospitals in the Black Country and Staffordshire are charging visitors up to six times more for an hour's parking than at their nearest public car parks. People are being made to fork out up to £2.60 for a short stay stint at their local hospital - yet can park on a council car park for as little as 40p. Politicians in the Black Country have grown increasingly frustrated by spiralling hospital parking charges, leading to calls for Government intervention. Sandwell Hospital and Dudley's Russells Hall Hospital currently charge the most for an hour's parking at £2.60. Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospital Trust, which runs Sandwell Hospital, said its rates were 'fixed at the average rate for hospital trusts in the West Midlands' and that lengthy stays are 'deliberately set below other organisations'.

SOURCE: Express and Star

### **Thursday 3rd September 2015** **Tender for Electronic Patient Record**

Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust has issued a tender for an electronic patient record that can integrate with its existing systems. A notice issued by the trust says it is looking to sign a ten-year contract with an option for a further five years and annual renewals. The total value is around £16.5 million.

Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals is looking to roll-out the EPR in two stages, the first of which will focus on wrapping the EPR around its existing patient administration.

SOURCE: Digital Health (Online)

### **Safeguarding Issues Raised and Action**

Contacted Sandwell MBC regarding concerns on staff at care home visited by enter and view

## Promotion and Engagement

### Groups and Meetings Membership

Health & Well Being Board Statutory place	Pam
Health & Well Being Board Executive Observer	Pam
Midlands Metropolitan Hospital Design Group 17/7/2014	Pam
Urgent Care Patient Advisory 2/3/2015	Pam
CCG Patient Partnership & Advisory Group	John
CCG Quality and Safety CCG Sub group. 2 HW reps, other is from Birmingham John appointed March 2015	John
Clinical Governance Committee (Public Health)	John
Sandwell Safeguarding Children's Board (SSCB) Statutory Local Authority group	Teresa
Sandwell Safeguarding Adults Board (SSAB) Contact: Jayne Leeson	Kwadwo
Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospital Trust	Bill
Sandwell Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) Sandwell Adult Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee merged with HOSC April 2015	Bill and Pam
Right Care Right Here Exec Group Sept 2014 (continuing from forerunner group)	Doug
Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Group	John

### Health and Social Care Group

Next Event	December 2015 (est)	Details to be confirmed
Last event	02/10/2015	
Venue	Yemeni Community Centre	
Attendees	20	
Theme	Right Care Right Here update, MHH Update & Primary Care listening exercise	
Previous Event	05/06/2015	
Venue	Portway Lifestyle	
Attendees	20	
Theme	Sandwell ASSIST	

### Consultation Network

As of 25/09/2015	Number of organisations in schedule	43
01/07/2015 -25/09/2015	Number of consultations	76

### Volunteering and Enter & View

01/07/2015-25/09/2015	Number of visits	2
Number of active volunteers	19	(9 Enter and View trained)

### Media

#### Social media update:

Twitter – 909, Facebook – 228

#### Press Update:

Halesowen News 04/08/15 CHC Report  
Express & Star 05/08/2015 Coronary Care reconfiguration  
Sandwell Chronicle 03/09/2015 Hospital Complaints