**Healthwatch Priority Project Decision Checklist**

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| Proposer: Alexia Farmer |  | Date proposed: April 9 2025 |  |
| Decision to be made on which Health and Social Care services should HW agree as priority projects. | | | |
| Summary of decision to be made  A decision is required on should be a priority project for HWS 2025/26 be **Cancer Treatment Pathways**. Pathways to be determined following a listening survey and call out for information late summer early autumn 2025/26. | | | |
| How much evidence is available about the issue? (1 being limited evidence from limited sources, 4 being well researched with a range of evidence from a range of robust sources)?  3 /4  From our public priority project survey, cancer pathways were highlighted as a priority for local people. We are planning to do a deeper dive into diagnosis, treatment, emotional and follow up support, end of life and the impact on families. This will also include patients understanding of their condition and communication between providers and the patient.  Transport  Many patients that reside in Sandwell have treatment at Queen Elizabeth Hospital for specialised treatment such as Radiotherapy, Chemotherapy and Immunotherapy. Not all people have access to a car and patient transport is not always available or quick. This means some patients who have had treatment and are vulnerable may be using public transport.  Reason for score:  Identified as a priority in our listening survey undertook through public engagement and online. | | | |
| Is the issue going to impact on lots of people? (1 being relatively little, 4 being community wide and likely to affect large numbers of people)  3 / 4  Evidence shows that there is a casual link between cancer and deprivation. In 2015, the West Midlands had a higher proportion of its population living in areas in the most deprived quintile (29%) compared to the England average (20%). Birmingham had the highest proportion of its population living in some of the most deprived neighbourhoods in England, where 57% of the population are resident in areas in the most deprived quintile. Sandwell, Stoke-on-Trent, Walsall and Wolverhampton also all have very high proportions of their population living in the most deprived areas of England (56%, 53%, 49% and 54% respectively).  Evidence also shows that there are risk factors associated with cancer rates. These include smoking prevalence, obesity and physical inactivity.  Data shows that Sandwell is an out liner in all 3 factors.  **Diagnosis**  Separate figures show 1.6 million patients in England were waiting for a key diagnostic test in January 2025 – the same as in December 2024  At Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals Trust, 19,509 patients were waiting for one of 13 standard tests, such as an MRI scan, non-obstetric ultrasound or gastroscopy at this time.  Of them, 4,796 (25%) had been waiting for at least six weeks.  Other figures show cancer patients at Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals Trust are not being seen quickly enough.  The NHS states 85% of cancer patients with an urgent referral should start treatment within 62 days.  But NHS England data shows just 71% of cancer patients urgently referred to Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals Trust in January began treatment within two months of their referral.  That was up from both 70% in December, and 70% in January 2024.  Professor Pat Price, leading oncologist and chair of Radiotherapy UK, said: "Today's cancer data shows that yet again we are going backwards, and the cancer crisis is only deepening.  **Support Services**  Local evidence has shown that there have historically been limited support services for patinate with cancer such as counselling, therapy and emotional support.  HWS want to find out what additional support services patients and loved ones can access. Also we want to look at the levels of support for people that are end of life.  Reason for score:  Local data and diagnosis challenges. | | | |
| What is the impact on people on community groups who experience health inequalities and who feel their voice is seldom heard? (1 being relatively little, 4 likely to affect large numbers of those seldom heard)  3 / 4  One out of 2 people will get cancer in their lifetime. Cancer has a major impact on individuals, their lives and their families.  Sandwell did have a Cancer support hotline for people who are worried they may have cancer but this was decommissioned by the Trust. However as cancer detection increases there is need for early detection both national and locally. However, statistics show that the West Midlands has a high proportion of cancer diagnosis at later stages and in particularly within ethnic minority communities.  Reason for score:  Rates of cancer detection nationally and locally. | | | |
| Does the issue help HWS to have a positive influence on health and social care services? (1 being unlikely to, 4 being highly likely to)  3 /4  HWS will use the findings from our engagement to work with providers and commissioners to hopefully bring about any recommendations for improvements. We will also work with providers to understand some of the challenges that they face which could make the patient journey more positive.  Reason for score:  The need for further awareness raising around early detection and screening. | | | |
| Does the issue align with local strategies and needs assessments? (1 being little alignment, and 4 being significant alignment)  3 / 4  In 2024 The Blackcountry ICS and local partners including Healthwatch Sandwell held a series of cancer awareness sessions across the 6 towns.  Healthwatch Sandwell are dedicated to promoting and protecting the health and wellbeing of all residents within our community. The Public Health team works tirelessly to tackle health inequalities, prevent illness, and improve overall quality of life for everyone in Sandwell.  We address key health issues such as obesity, smoking, mental health, and infectious diseases.  Reason for score:  Local demand in services and a national perspective. | | | |
| Is the issue already being dealt with effectively by someone else? (1 being dealt with satisfactorily by someone else, 4 not being dealt with at all)  3 /4  We have been informed that SWBHT are going to be putting a Macmillan Cancer Hub in MMUH. This will have a dedicated staff member who will give advice on a number of areas such as:  Financial and benefit advice  Holistic therapies and treatments advice  End of Life advice and support  Counselling advice and sign posting  Booklets with information on a variety of cancers  The Trust are working in partnership with Macmillan around patient advice, information and counselling.  The Trust also has a series of specialist teams working with patients around some of the most common cancers such as Bowel, prostate, breast and cervical cancer.  Sandwell Lions Club hold prostate cancer awareness sessions and PSA checking events. | | | |
| Total score: 18 /24  Vote of HAB members taken: Majority reached: | | | |
| Decision of the HAB: | | | |
| Reasons why the decision was made: | | | |
| Date decision ratified:  April 9 2025 | | | |