

Healthwatch Sandwell – Priority Projects Programme 2022/23

Healthwatch Sandwell are the independent voice of the public in health and social care services in Sandwell. HWS carry out projects each year that are based on the priorities of the public, service providers and commissioners. The purpose of the projects is to gather insight on patients experiences and views of services. This information is used to help inform and influence change in health and social care delivery in Sandwell and as part of the wider Black Country health and care system.

HWS are planning the following priority projects for 2022/23:

The patient experience of accessing primary care services

Accessibility for patients – meeting information and communication needs

Exploring the impact of language barriers in health and care services

Addressing inequalities in health and care services

Healthwatch Sandwell engaged and consulted key stakeholders to set the 2022/23 priority projects. Feedback helping set the priorities included:

Sandwell residents - access to G.P. appointments, concerns for elderly, autistic and learning disabled people.

Sandwell Local Authority Commissioners - Health inequalities – impact on families with children/dependants with disabilities, digitally excluded, very elderly people.

Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust – improving patient care and population health outcomes through the Trust’s “Fundamentals of Care” programme. Ensuring service delivery will be what patients want/need – that patients feel **listened to, well informed, and **involved in decisions** about their care. Patients engagement, involvement in Sandwell Place Based Partnership.**

The patient experience of accessing primary care services

Residents of Sandwell regularly express frustrations with accessing G.P. Surgery appointments. The appointment booking systems cause problems for many patients. The demand for appointments exceeds supply and allocation may create inequalities in access. Awareness and use of alternative primary care service options could be improved relieving pressure on the system. HWS proposes to help promote the alternatives through the course of the project.

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Sandwell are planning to:

Listen to Sandwell residents experiences and views on accessing G.P. Surgery appointments and

Seek to understand the challenges of using booking system options, the experiences and outcomes for patients.

Explore the inequalities of access to G.P. Surgery appointments created by the systems relating to health needs.

Ask whether patients are aware of alternative options for primary care services and promote those options.

Healthwatch Sandwell propose to work with the Sandwell Primary Care Networks on this project and publish the findings in a report to help inform and improve services and patient experience.

Report outputs:

Mini reports reflecting components of the project will be produced and inform the basis of the main report.

Accessibility for patients – meeting information and communication needs

The NHS Accessible Information Standard states NHS funded health and social care providers must meet the information and communication needs of people who access services. Meaning people with disabilities, impairments or sensory loss, their parents or carers have rights to reasonable adjustments. Providers must ask and identify communication needs and preferences, recording the information so needs can be met.



are planning to:

- Engage** and work together with Sandwell people with disabilities, impairments, sensory loss, parents and carers
- Exploring** application of the Accessible Information Standard in Sandwell primary care, hospitals and social care
- Gathering** patient, parent, carer experiences of health and care services and reasonable adjustments being made.
- Work** with focus groups of people with disabilities, impairments and sensory loss to report on findings.

Healthwatch Sandwell propose to support the focus groups of people with disabilities, impairments or sensory loss to present the published report findings & recommendations to the Sandwell Place Based Partnership.

Report outputs:

Mini reports reflecting components of the project will be produced and inform the basis of the main report.

Exploring the impact of language barriers in health and care services

Over 34% of Sandwell population are of minority ethnicity, some, especially elderly have little or no English language skills. Language barriers in communication present risks to patient's health, wellbeing and inequity in services and health outcomes. Poor communication could result in poor understanding of health issues, management of medication, and self-care and risk missed or misdiagnosis, lack of treatment or improvement.

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Sandwell **are planning to:**

Aim to establish connections with a range of minority ethnicity people through community support organisations

Proposing to develop mutual relationships, aiming to understand and explore language barrier issues and any **Inequalities** experienced with health and care services as a result of difficulties with communication.

Gain insight on the interpreter service offers available in Sandwell and whether they meet the patient groups needs.

Healthwatch Sandwell propose to:

- Reflect findings of the project engagement work in collaboration with Sandwell residents with English language barriers highlighting service experiences and providing insight on health and care outcomes.
- Align insights gathered with focused work regarding language barriers being progressed by Healthwatch England.

Report outputs:

A series of snapshot reports will be produced and used to inform local services and Healthwatch England insights.