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Hello reader,

May is here and we are excited to be working on our new priorities for 2023/2024!

Keep an eye out over the coming weeks to see what our priorities are for this year and how you can get involved.

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# Hello May



# Welcome to our new readers



Welcome to our new readers! Thank you for joining us and keeping yourself up to date with your local champion!

We are always looking for ways to keep our readers entertained, if there is a topic you would like to see, let us know! We want to hear from you.

To get in touch with us about our ebulletin topics, to appear in our ebulletin, or for any other information, please email [loretta.higgins@healthwatchesandwell.co.uk](mailto:loretta.higgins@healthwatchesandwell.co.uk)

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## Guided By You

Thank you to those who joined us at our last Guided By You event at Oldbury. We had some great discussions!



Would you like to tell us your views on your local Health and Social Care services?  
Get in touch using the link below.

[Share your views](#)

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## Overview of our engagement

Healthwatch Sandwell is your independent consumer champion for health and social care services in Sandwell. Our job is to champion the consumer interests of those using the services and give local people an opportunity to speak out about their concerns. We listen to views, concerns, and compliments about services to help shape and improve them so that people are accessing the most quality and appropriate care.

Take a look at how many people we have reached recently.



January - March  
2023  
an overview

10,558 people  
engaged with us



People we reached on  
social media

5191

Visits to our  
website

3603

People we engaged  
with at outreach

1764

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Want to share your thoughts on a service? Head over to the 'Have Your Say' section on our website using the link below.

[Have Your Say](#)

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## Primary Care and Referrals

We continue to have conversations with people about difficulties they are experiencing with health care services. Booking a GP appointment and the lack of available appointments remain one of the key concerns for local people. People are also concerned that results from assessment, imaging and routine tests are delayed. The anxiety can cause mental well-being issues - people have told us that they are just giving up.



8am to get an appointment. I was told that appointments can only be given on line or on the telephone. It was difficult for me to travel as I am in a lot of pain with my knees – that's why I need to see a GP"

"I was referred by my Dr to see a heart consultant. I heard nothing for three months and when I contacted the hospital, I was told that there was no referral and to go back to my Dr. I have booked an appointment for six weeks time"

"I waited nine hours for hospital transport to take me back home after my operation"

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## Has the cost of living affected your health?

Has the cost of living affected your health?

Do you know what services are available to you?

Healthwatch Sandwell offer Information and Signposting. Get in touch if you would like information on services in your area.

Call us on 0121 569 7211 between 09:00 - 17:00 Monday to Friday or email us on [info@healthwatchesandwell.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchesandwell.co.uk)



## 1 in 10

people have avoided buying over the counter medication they normally rely on

Some people are choosing not to take medication due to the cost of prescription charges. Some people are choosing not to attend medical appointments due to the cost of travel.

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### Stay in the know

To read more about what people are telling us, take a look at our January - March Insight report which is available on the reports section of our website. [Link below!](#)



## [Healthwatch England](#)

### **Healthwatch England - GP referrals and ambulance delays update**

Healthwatch England (HWE) published the second piece of our research on GP referrals, which was based on the experiences of 1,518 people who have asked for a GP referral for tests, diagnosis or treatment. Nearly one in five (18%) of those people required four or more GP appointments to get a referral. HWE called on decision



HWE secured an exclusive article with the Times to highlight the issue of referral delays.

[Healthwatch England - GP referrals and ambulance delays full article](#)

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## Team update



We said a fond farewell to one of our long standing board members Bill. We had a lovely day celebrating all the work Bill has supported us with over the years.

Thank you for all your time and effort Bill, you will be missed by the team.



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## Come and see us

## Come and see us

Come and see Melissa Elders our Community Outreach Lead at venues and events around Sandwell, for Information, Advice and Signposting



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Look out for dates and venues in our weekly ebulletin and on social media

Sandwell Pensioners Convention, Central Library, 316 High Street, West Bromwich B70 8DZ

**Wednesday 3rd May at 11.00am -**

**12.30pm** Buds Carers Group, CommunityChurch, Hope House, 142 George Road, Oldbury B68 9LN

**Thursday 4th May at 10.30am -**

**12.00pm** Community Chat, Asda Cape Hill, Asda Cape Hill, Off Windmill Lane, Smethwick B66 3EN

**Friday 5th May at 10.00am -3.00pm,**

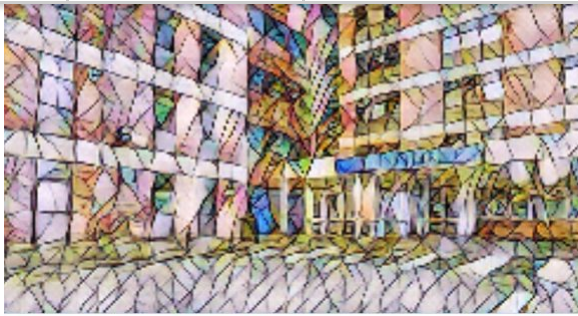
SDCA - Deaf Awareness Week Festival, Brook Street Community Centre, 1 Brook Street, Tipton DY4 9DD

**Tuesday 9th May at 10.00am - 11.30am**

Coffee Morning, West Bromwich Bus Station, 15 West Bromwich Ringway, St Michael Street, West Bromwich B70 7AB

**Tuesday 9th May at 1.30pm -2.30pm**

Tame Valley Medical Centre PPG, Tame Valley Medical Centre, Friar Park Road, Wednesbury WS10 0JS (PPG members only)



Have you accessed Health and/or Social Care services in Sandwell and want to share your experience?

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Contact us on 0121 569 7211 or  
[info@healthwatchsandwell.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchsandwell.co.uk)

Healthwatch are your independent organisation who champion the views of patients and social care users in Sandwell. Tell us your views, needs and experiences to help Sandwell get the best possible Health and Care.



Share your views

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## Would you like your organisation to appear in our weekly newsletter?

If you would like to share information on your organisation or an event you are holding, please contact [loretta.higgins@healthwatchsandwell.co.uk](mailto:loretta.higgins@healthwatchsandwell.co.uk) to have a FREE section in our weekly newsletter.



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