



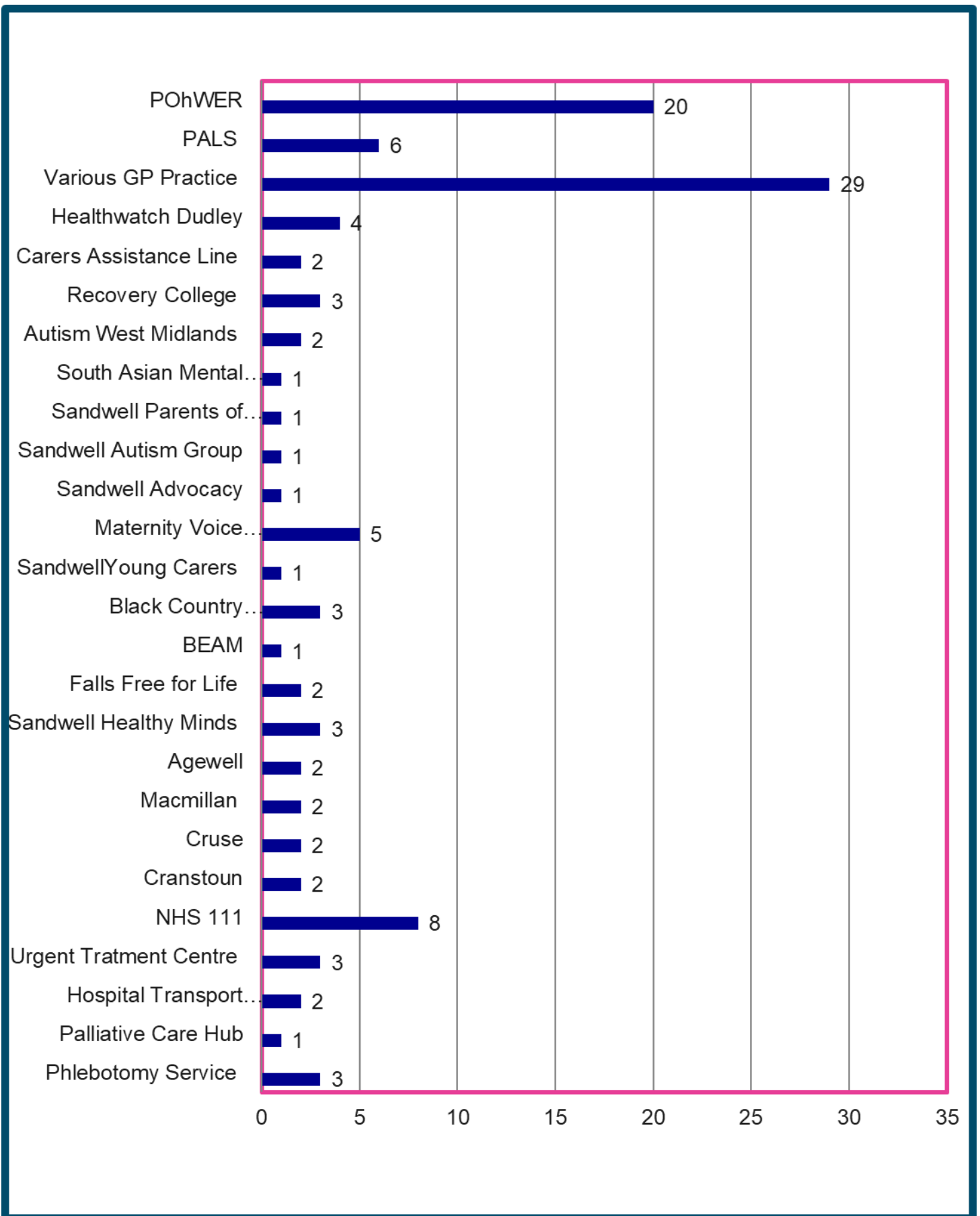
Insight Report

October – December 2022

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.

October – December at a glance

- We engaged with **689** local people.
- We attended **33** community engagement events.
- We gave **21** talks to community groups to inform what we do.
- We have **24** live cases where we are still offering support.
- We had **1371** web site visits and **2929** webs site views.
- We have signposted 110 people to support services.



What we have been hearing about

Access to GP

HWS continue to have multiple conversations with people about booking a GP appointment and the lack of available appointments. People have told us that they are overdue with reviews for their health conditions. People have also told us that they are struggling to get mental health support through GP referral.

"I went to GP Practice in taxi to book an appointment – turned away, told to phone. Told them "No good as they do not answer the phone". I bought stuff myself; I ask my kids to help with my Fibromyalgia, knee & hip pain."

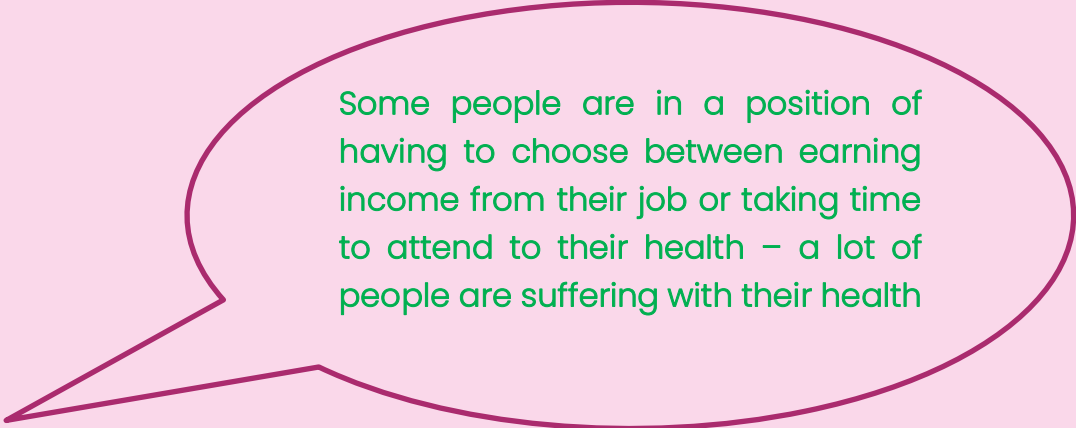
"I went in person to book an appointment, was not allowed in. Phone appointments were fully booked, I tried and tried every day, then gave up and rang 111"

"Our Practice offers a call back, but when they call back, they just tell you there are no appointments available"

"Wait in a queue for so long then the phone cuts off when it is nearly your turn"

"Having to call 30-40 times to get through!"

"With school runs to do at that time of day – how can I phone my GP Practice at 8am?"



Some people are in a position of having to choose between earning income from their job or taking time to attend to their health – a lot of people are suffering with their health

Julie's Story



I have not been feeling very well for a while. I had been to the pharmacy, and they were helpful but told me I should really see the Doctor. I cannot read very well so it was difficult for me to book an appointment online. I tried lots of times to book through the telephone, but I could not get through. It is hard before 8 am as I am at work on some days and told I cannot use my phone. Someone told me that if I went to the surgery in person before 8am and wait for it to open I would be able to get an appointment. I found someone to look after my kids and take them to breakfast club at school, so I was able to go. I do not drive so I had to catch the bus. I took two buses and then had to walk. When I arrived, there were six people in front of me. When I got to speak to the receptionist, I was told that the appointments had all gone, and I should come back the next day or phone before 8 am



Bob's Story



My medication has almost run out. I cannot get a repeat prescription until I have seen my GP. I cannot get an appointment for 6 weeks. If I have no medication my condition will get worse, and I will get infections that will need more treatment.



Access to Emergency Care

HWS continue to hear about issues that people are experiencing when trying to access Emergency Care:

“I called NHS 111 – I thought I had dislocated my hip. It took two hours to get through. I was told to go to A&E within the hour. When I arrived, I was assessed by a triage nurse – I was told the wait for an Xray was up to 7 hours. I had the x ray within three hours. The Radiographer told me my hip was intact, but I would need to be signed off by a consultant. I was advised that the wait was in excess of 8 hours”

“I called an Ambulance as I thought my husband was having a heart attack. He has had two heart attacks already, so we understand the symptoms. I was told that there was up to a three hour wait for an ambulance to arrive and it would be quicker if I could get him to A&E myself”

“I was advised by NHS 111 to go to A&E. I was being really sick. When I arrived, I was given a cardboard bowl to use. I was sick in this 3 times in the waiting area. I was really embarrassed and felt undignified. It was not nice for other people to see. There were other people using sick bowls too – it was awful”

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