

Midland Metropolitan University Hospital Emergency & Children's Emergency Department Experience Report



May 2025



**Engaging
Communities**
Solutions

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Introduction

Healthwatch Sandwell (HWS) is an independent organisation dedicated to representing the views and experiences of people living in Sandwell about health and social care services. HWS gathers feedback from residents about their experiences with health and social care services and uses this information to work alongside service providers and commissioners to help improve these services. One of the main ways HWS collects feedback is by carrying out projects that address the public's priorities, focusing on specific services, health conditions, or specific groups within the community.

Purpose of this report

This report evaluates patient experiences across **three separate visits** at the Midland Metropolitan University Hospital to:

- The **Main Emergency Department (ED)**
- The **Children's Emergency Department (CED)**

Key areas to focus include:

- Patient and family feedback
- Wait times and service efficiency
- Recommendations for improvement

Context

The Midland Metropolitan University Hospital (MMUH) in Smethwick officially commenced operations on 6 October 2024. As part of the regional healthcare restructuring, the Accident & Emergency (A&E) department at Sandwell Hospital was closed on the same day, with all emergency patients redirected to MMUH. Subsequently, the A&E department at City Hospital remained operational until 10 November 2024, after which all emergency services were fully transferred to MMUH. This transition was implemented to improve the efficiency of emergency care services by consolidating resources and specialist expertise within a single facility, as a result improving patient outcomes and simplifying access to critical care.

Investigating and understanding people's experiences in the Emergency Department (ED) and Children's Emergency Department in Sandwell is crucial for several reasons, supported by key statistics and findings:

- The Emergency Department is a high-volume area in Sandwell and West Birmingham, but patient experience scores are below target only 72% of patients rated their experience positively, compared to a local target of 75%.
- In Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals Trust, 7,941 people waited more than four hours for emergency care in a recent reporting period, highlighting significant delays.
- NHS England reported that children under five made up 9% of emergency attendances, and those aged 5–14 years also accounted for 9%.
- Older adults (65+) represented 27% of attendances and 45% of emergency admissions, showing high demand among elderly residents.

Methodology

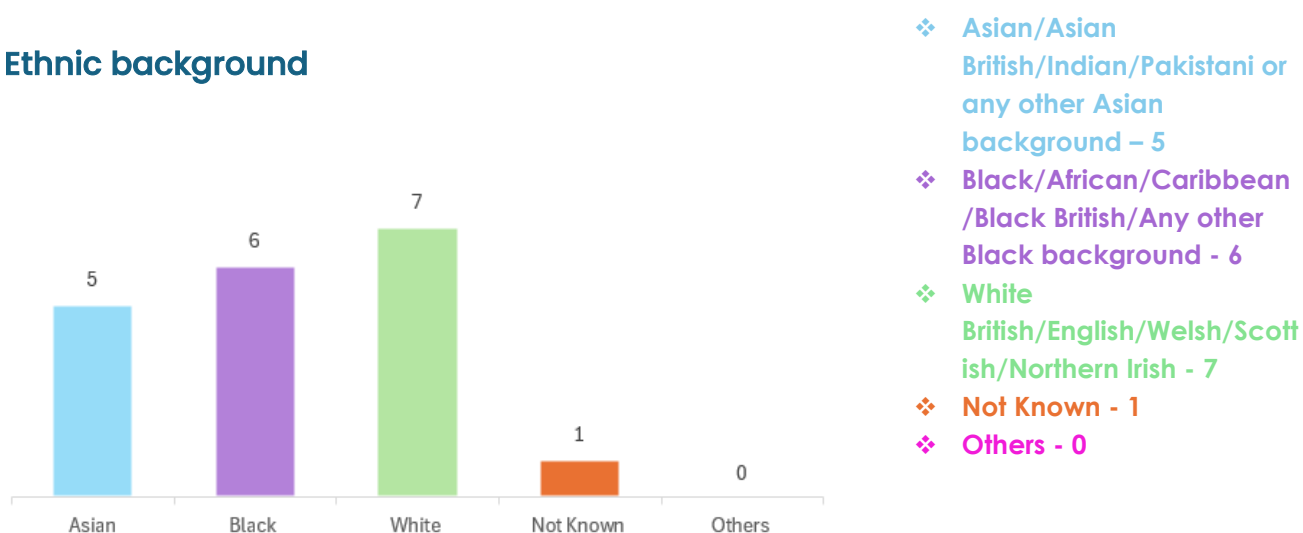
To understand the real experiences of patients and families in Midland Met's A&E and Children's ED, we engaged directly with those who used the services. Our approach ensured honest, unbiased feedback while respecting privacy and care needs. Between April – May 2025, we gathered feedback through 3 visits at MMUH.

We asked a series of questions:

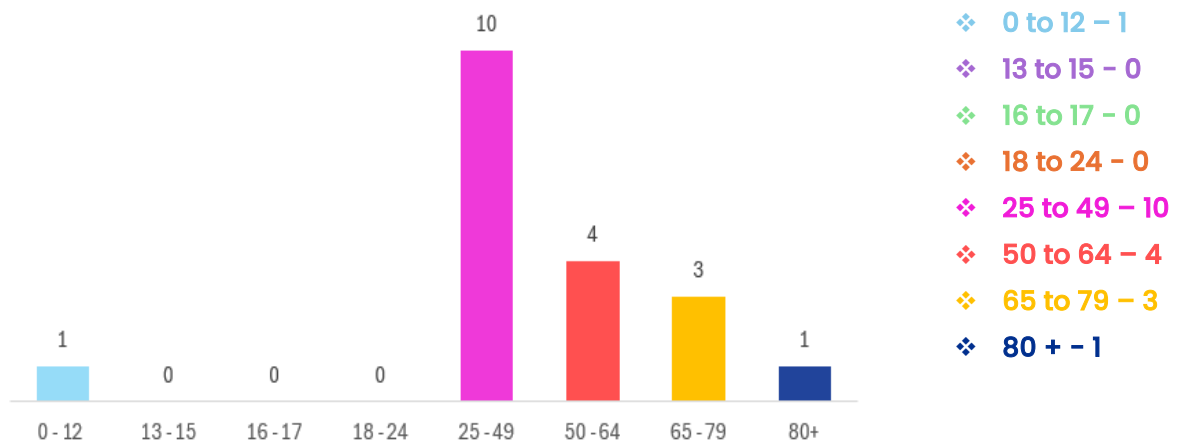
- How long have you been waiting so far today?
- How has your experience with the staff been?
- How would you describe your visit overall?
- Did you have any trouble finding the A&E department or other areas you needed?

Participants profile

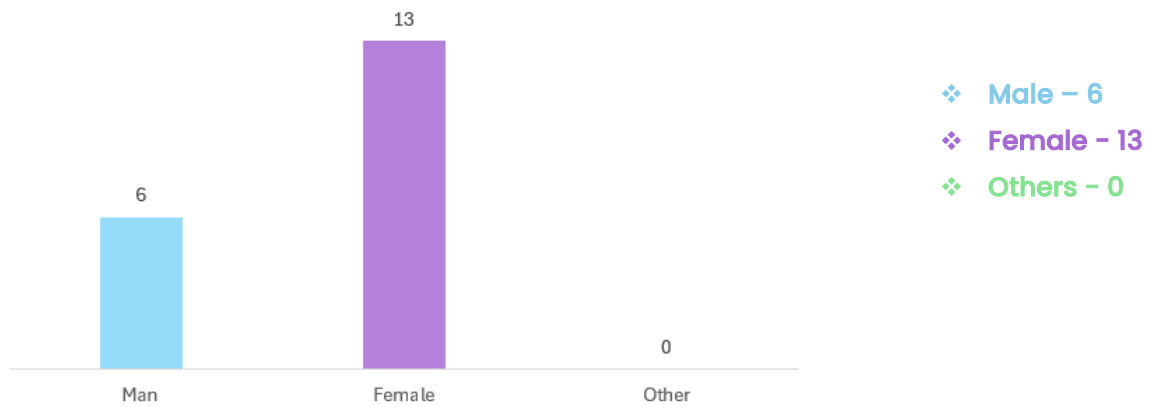
Ethnic background



Age group



Gender



Findings

The experiences shared during the three visits reflected a wide range of views, some individuals had positive experiences, others described negative experiences, and many shared mixed experiences.

Some patients praised the care and kindness shown by staff, especially in the Children's Emergency Department. Others raised concerns about the long waiting times, poor communication, and uncertainty about procedures. While many acknowledged positive aspects of the service, there was also recognition of areas requiring improvement.

This section of the report shares feedback from individuals, gathered through face-to-face conversations during each visit. As participation was voluntary, respondents could choose which questions to answer, resulting in various in response numbers across different sections.

Stories

ONE

My parent is 89 years old, and lives independently. They were rushed into MMUH with a Stroke, 10 days ago. The quality of treatment was very good in A&E, they had a CT scan and soon after went to C6 Stroke ward, in there, they received a very good level of care and the quality of food was really good, however, during the weekend there were a lot of Bank staff who did not seem to be very attentive, it was not their first time in the hospital as they has been previously when they had a fall but Sandwell STAR service was very good. The issue that we are facing now is with the discharge, OT wanted to give 1 call per day, which is not sufficient. We had to fight for 2 calls per day as they said the family will support, however, my sibling works full-time, and I have a chronic heart failure.

TWO

My partner came to A&E with stomach pains. We have been waiting from 2:30AM till 9:30AM to been seen by the doctor. It is not my first time in MMUH, however, the quality of service needs improvements. We faced major issues during the night as homeless people came to sleep in the A&E sitting area which makes my partner feel unsafe, I feel like more staff are needed because of the long delay to be assessed and the fact that they are not organised properly, no instructions on where to go, it took us 15 minutes to find the A&E by car.

THREE

We spoke to a young person that was having a miscarriage. It was their 2nd visit to A&E in 24 hours, as they came the day before, however, they could not stay because they were taking a long time to assess the patient, and they had to pick their child up from school. The patient previously contacted the GP that advised the 2nd visit. The patient wanted to access the Early Pregnancy unit, however, was told they needed a referral, and they only needed to have a scan. The patient stated that they were unhappy with the overall experience.

FIVE

A patient told HWS that they had a good experience overall. They were positively impressed about how quick the service was, as they had been waiting for 40 mins to be seen by a doctor for an ECG scan, they also managed to reach A&E easily thanks to the help of the volunteers.

SEVEN

I came in the Children's Emergency Department with my son this morning around 10:30. This is our 3rd time, they did and X-ray and assessed my son quite quickly. We had a positive experience overall.

FOUR

I came to A&E because I wanted to have a CT scan, it is not my first time as I previously went last Wednesday at 10:00AM because I had a concussion. I was concerned about the delay in assessment, as I was worried that this could impact my brain. Today, I am very disappointed because I was referred by my GP specifically for the CT scan, but instead, the nurses repeated the same tests such as blood pressure and blood test that were previously checked at my GP. The staff is good, however, is the staff enough? I am not happy with the service; it would be useful if in the emergency reception area there is a paper that includes information on what to expect and what would be the

SIX

Wheelchair inpatient informed us that they have waited up to 20 mins after pressing the help call button. They were disappointed, as could not walk independently and was disorientated by the hospital signage. A member of our team assisted them to access the correct lift to return to the ward.



Conclusion

Feedback from patients and families reveals positive, negative and mixed experiences in MMUH's A&E and Childre's A&E. While many praised the staff's care and modern facilities, three key issues stood out:

1. **Long and unpredictable waiting times**
2. **Lack of guidance** on what to expect during treatment
3. **Confusing signage** – making it hard to navigate the hospital

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Share your feedback on Health and Social Care services in Sandwell by using the "Have Your Say" section on our website.

<https://www.healthwatchsandwell.co.uk/share-your-views>

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