

Stakeholder Perceptions Report

May 2025



Engaging
Communities
Solutions

healthwatch

Sandwell

Introduction

Healthwatch Sandwell held a focus group to understand how their stakeholders perceive Healthwatch Sandwell and the delivery of the service. The discussion was based upon the five values that were developed by Healthwatch England and local Healthwatch aim to embody. Stakeholders were invited by email to take part in the online focus group and this report outlines the themes from the discussion that took place.

Findings

There were six stakeholders who took part in the focus group who were all representatives of the local authority including elected members and employees of the local authority. The focus group was also attended by two members of the team from Healthwatch Sandwell who supported the facilitator from Engaging Communities Solutions, the provider of Healthwatch Sandwell.

Truth

It was generally agreed that Healthwatch Sandwell were aware of the issues that affected local residents in the community and the wider context that health and social care providers were working within. The involvement of Healthwatch Sandwell in statutory partnerships such as the Health and Wellbeing Board, raising issues and bringing reports to the Board was seen as exemplifying how Healthwatch Sandwell represented the views of local residents.

It was felt that the reports that Healthwatch Sandwell produces and brings to the Boards ensured that they heard the voice of the citizen. There was the suggestion that reports could be more co-produced as an area for improvement and to widen the involvement of local residents.

Equity

People felt that Healthwatch Sandwell were generally representative of the local population and had a good understanding of the different communities within Sandwell. Whilst the good work was recognised it was commented that in some communities there was a disconnect between what they thought the role of Healthwatch was and what it actually is. There was the offer of more assistance with accessing some faith groups to broaden the reach of the outreach, as well as a recognition that elected members and others had a role to play to share information on what Healthwatch Sandwell is and how it can support communities.

There was discussion about the engagement with children and young people, particularly in relation to SEND and how there are underrepresented groups within SEND feedback. The work that Healthwatch Sandwell had undertaken with young people was recognised and feedback given on how the young people involved had felt it had had a positive impact upon them.

Impact

Further discussion about the impact that Healthwatch Sandwell had had was centred around the information it provides to the statutory boards, including Health and Wellbeing Board and Safeguarding Adults Board. Information that was taken to the boards was followed up as pieces of work for the boards.

The work undertaken through the enter and view programme was specifically mentioned as having an impact through the recommendations from the visits and how the reports are used by the local authority quality and safety team.

Independence

People taking part in the focus group saw Healthwatch Sandwell as being independent. It was commented that Healthwatch Sandwell were able to find out things that local authority and the various boards were not able to. Furthermore, their role holding other stakeholders to account through the boards meant that Healthwatch Sandwell were able to demonstrate their independence.

Collaboration

People were able to point towards how Healthwatch Sandwell were a partner on the statutory boards and had a high profile with professionals who were involved with those boards. It was seen positively that Healthwatch Sandwell have built their own profile with agencies including the ICB and were asked to carry out additional commissions with them outside the contract with the local authority.

It was commented that sometimes senior leaders did not feel that they were involved with the development of the Healthwatch Sandwell work plan and wanted to be able to contribute to it. There was discussion about how to gain their attention during the development process as opportunities are given for stakeholders to contribute to the process, but these are not always taken up.

Our response



Healthwatch Sandwell thank those who have contributed. However after promoting the focus group through our various channels it was disappointing that the number of contributors were low in comparison to the invitations that were circulated, and there were no health partners in attendance. That said there were open and transparent discussions about the work that we do and an overall positive response in regard to our independence and the reach we have in communicating the voice of Sandwell people to the various statutory boards.

We take note that senior leaders did not feel that they are involved with the development of the Healthwatch Sandwell annual work plan. In future we will work harder to ensure that there are more opportunities for contributions and ask that we have allocated time at the various board meetings we attend to have feedback about the design of design of our public survey and listening tours.

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The contract to provide Healthwatch Sandwell is held by Engaging Communities Solutions C.I.C.
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