

Healthwatch Sandwell Insight Report

September 2023

Diabetes: patient experiences of health, care and support services to help manage the condition



100+ Surveys completed



8 Focus Groups held

Service User Feedback

We joined a Punjabi speaking women's group to hear people's experiences of living with and managing diabetes. We explored together whether health, care and support services are meeting people's needs and looked at what could make things better.

We heard from the women's group that people are not receiving enough information about diabetes when diagnosed and for some people English language is a barrier. There is insufficient information available tailored to cultural foods and diets. We also heard that family responsibilities can make finding time to exercise for health challenging.

Diabetes UK have information resources available in other languages. We are continuing to work together engaging with South Asian community groups to understand cultural differences that may have an impact with diabetes and identify any gaps in health, care and support services. Reports on the findings will be published with recommendations for service improvements.

"You are very nice, you listened. Talking to Healthwatch Sandwell my problems already feel smaller."

Attendee comment.

Community Outreach



We engaged with **341** people



We attended **20** groups



We signposted **26** people



We have **40** open cases

Service User Feedback

Pharmacy issues

People have raised concerns about 2 pharmacies in Sandwell. Although, they have requested a designated pharmacy elsewhere, it has been swapped without consent back to the previous pharmacy. This has caused unnecessary stress and confusion.

One person deals with prescriptions on behalf of a relative and has found it particularly challenging. We referred the person to Time2talk, where they were able to contact the pharmacy involved and raise the issue on the person's behalf.

“It looks like matter has been taken in hand and hopefully resolved. Thanks.”

Often people choose a pharmacy as the location is nearby and convenient. If a person moves out of the Sandwell area, they will change to a GP surgery and pharmacy that is close to home. People have also noticed that the previous pharmacy will bring them back even though they are out of area.

Medication reviews

Person with high blood pressure has been getting out of breath. They are on multiple blood pressure medications that have not been reviewed recently. When they called for a GP appointment, they were offered one 2 weeks later. This caused the person anxiety, as they felt they needed to be seen sooner. We contacted the surgery on their behalf and requested a cancellation appointment. The person was given an earlier appointment, and it was confirmed that their blood pressure was too high. Issue has now been resolved.

Enter and View



We visited **2** providers



We listened to **10** service users

Service User Story

Unable to obtain urgent GP appointment

This patient was signposted to HWS by Healthy Sandwell (Public Health – Sandwell MBC)

The patient was experiencing physical pain which was affecting daily life and in particular mental health.

Previously this patient informed HWS that they had taken an overdose in 2022 and was hospitalised, this resulted in liver damage. The patient has family commitments and was finding life very difficult at present.

The patient tried to contact their GP and was waiting in a telephone queue (at one point was number 76). When the patient did get through, they were distressed and anxious due to pain and mental state. Unfortunately, the call handler was abrupt with the patient as the patient was unable to focus on the advice being given due to brain fog. The call handler told the patient that they had 'attitude' but the patient was at the end of their tether.

Outcome

The Business Manager from the GP surgery contacted HWS and explained that all requests for appointments are triaged. When submitting a request, either online, by telephone or by visiting the surgery, patients will be asked some questions and the clinician reviewing this request will decide whether a face-to-face appointment is clinically appropriate and the urgency to be seen.

It was confirmed that patient had been allocated a face-to-face appointment.

The Business Manager confirmed that the patient's issues have been referred to the Complaints team at Sandwell & West Birmingham Hospital so that an investigation will be carried out into the patient's concerns, and they will receive a full response.

Healthwatch Sandwell Annual Public Meeting



On 26th September we were joined by organisations and members of the public for our Annual Public Meeting where she shared our work from over the year and our current priority project.

Thank you to those who joined us.