

Primary Care: General Practice Access Update

Sandwell

21st November 2023



Progress to date

- Following feedback at a previous Overview & Scrutiny Committee, the ICB created an aid memoire for Councillors to utilise with their local surgeries to support appropriate signposting and decision making
- Investment into local initiatives over and above the national standard for appointments. These additional appointments supported improved outcomes for respiratory conditions, which consistently ranks in the top 3 conditions why people present at General Practice or ED – model commended by NHS England National Director.
- National recognition post Covid of a requirement for a new Modern General Practice to meet the changing needs of local populations. The ICB and Sandwell Health & Care Partnership have been supporting GPs to transition to the new model
- Local Town events – face to face engagement in every town to listen to feedback on current services and care; including general practice



Local Context

- The ICB does not run GP practices, these are individual businesses commissioned to meet the needs of local people
- Sandwell has 48 Individual GP Practices, serving a *registered* population of 372,338
- These practices have grouped to form 8 Primary Care Networks
- Individual practices serve varying numbers of registered populations, ranging from 2,045 (smallest practice) to 42,381 (largest practice)

Challenges

- Individual practices operate differently - implementing modern general practice across Sandwell will take time
- We need to ensure the infrastructure is in place this includes bringing individual practices and other parts of the system up to a level of readiness



National Context

- **NHS Long Term Plan (NHSE, 2019)**
 - Primary Care Networks (PCNs) and integration with multi-disciplinary teams
 - People having more control of their own health
 - Create more digitally-enabled services
- **Next steps for integrating primary care: Fuller Stocktake Report (Fuller, 2022)**
 - Streamlining access to care and advice
 - Providing more pro-active, personalised care with support from a multi-disciplinary team of professionals
 - Helping people to stay well for longer
- **The recovery plan for primary care (NHSE, 2023)**
 1. Tackle the 8am rush and reduce the number of people struggling to contact their practice
 - *Empower patients*
 - *Implement Modern General Practice Access*
 - *Build capacity*
 - *Cut Bureaucracy*
 2. For patients to know on the day they contact their practice how their request will be managed
- **GP National Contract 2023/24**
 - Capacity and Access Improvement Plans



RECOVERY PLAN FOR PRIMARY CARE (May 2023)

1. Patient Empowerment

- Self-referral pathways
- Increased provision through community pharmacy
- NHS APP - see own records/request prescriptions

2. Implement “modern general practice”

- Patients know on the day how their request is handled
- Cloud based technology
- Digital tools/care navigation training/transitional resources for those committing to adopt approach **(March 2025)**
- Transformation support through National General Practice Improvement

3. Build capacity

- Expand specialist training/easier for newly trained GPs to remain in England
- Schemes to encourage retention
- Change planning guidance – priority of primary care facilities in new housing schemes

4. Cut bureaucracy

- Primary/secondary care interface – FIT notes/internal referrals/call and recall/point of contact to resolve issues
- Reduce requests to GPs to verify medical evidence/self-certification.

GP NATIONAL CONTRACT 2023/24

PCN Capacity and Access Improvement Plans

- Improving patient experience of contact
- Increase in utilisation of cloud-based technology/online consultations
- Validation of appointment books.

Modern General Practice

The three underpinning principles are:-

- Equitable access – irrespective of point of access
- Embrace digital tools
- Right service/right clinician

Objectives

See and understand all expressed demand

Reduce avoidable appointments and support safer more equitable allocation of capacity

Make full use of a multi-professional team and improve the work environment

Process

- Phone
- Online
- Walk in

Collect information
Enhanced information captured into online system. Request additional information or photos where needed to help remote closure

Filter
to remove admin tasks

Signpost / Refer
to other services and information

Review, prioritise, allocate
including review for continuity of care

Book
Schedule consultation (phone or face to face) via SMS or phone

Intervention

- Admin
- Self-serve

- Refer community pharmacy
- Refer to other primary or community services
- Refer to VCSE services

Remote close via message (e.g., SMS)

Multi-professional team

Workforce: Increasing to become a multi-professional team

Traditional primary care team

- General Practice Nurses
- Health Care Assistants
- Physician Associates
- Clinical Pharmacists
- Advanced Clinical Practitioners

Modern primary care team

- Pharmacy technicians
- Social prescribing link workers
- Health and wellbeing coaches
- First contact physiotherapists
- Dieticians
- Podiatrists
- Occupational therapists
- Nurse training associates
- Nursing associates
- Community paramedics
- Adult Mental Health Practitioner
- CYP Mental Health Practitioner
- Care co-ordinators
- Digital Transformation Lead
- GP Assistant



Part 1: Patient experience of contact

- Work with ICB's Involvement Team to increase engagement with patients and the public, including improving the engagement processes with Patient Participation Groups (PPG's)
- Ensure compliance with National Friends and Family test (*Overall, how would you rate your experience of the service?*)
- Work with PPG's to use local and national patient surveys to drive improvement around the following:
 - Getting through on the phone
 - Using the GP practices website
 - Satisfaction with appointment you were offered
 - Experience of making an appointment
 - Overall experience of your GP practice



GP Patient Survey

Black Country Integrated Care Board



Black Country
Integrated Care Board



GP Patient Survey Capacity and Access Findings for Sandwell 2023

About the survey

25,520

surveys distributed

5,502

responses received.

Includes data on:

3,293 patients with a long term condition, disability or illness

1,145 carers

775 smokers



This year's survey was conducted from 3 January and 3 April 2023. Minor changes were made to the questionnaire in 2023 and 2022 to ensure that it continued to reflect how primary care services are delivered and how patients experience them. This followed more substantial changes in 2021.

Overall experience of GP practice

50%

The majority of patients had a good overall experience of their GP practice (56% in 2022,72% in 2021)



Access to Services



41%

have used an online service



29%

find it easy to get through to their practice by phone (32% in 2022, 51% in 2021)

Type of appointment

The type of appointment patients received

50% In person

50% Remote

Ease of accessing Practice Website



44%

Answered Fairly or Very Easy (53% in 2022, 67% in 2021)

Describe experience of making an appointment



34%

Described making an appointment as very good or fairly good (38% in 2022, 57% in 2021)

Satisfied with the appointment offered



93% Satisfied with appointment offered (93% in 2022, 96% in 2021)

Key points:

- Satisfaction in access declined over recent years
- Satisfaction of service when through the door is positive
- CAIPs focus on improvement in these satisfaction measures

PCN Capacity and Access Improvement Plans (CAIPs)

Part 2: Ease of access and demand management

- Establish whether Practices have Cloud Based Telephony (CBT)
- Fully utilise functions within CBT e.g. call queueing, call back and data analysis
- Effective use and promotion of on-line consultation systems (form-based triage)
- Work with ICB's Digital First Team to develop and standardise websites



PCN Capacity and Access Improvement Plans (CAIPs)

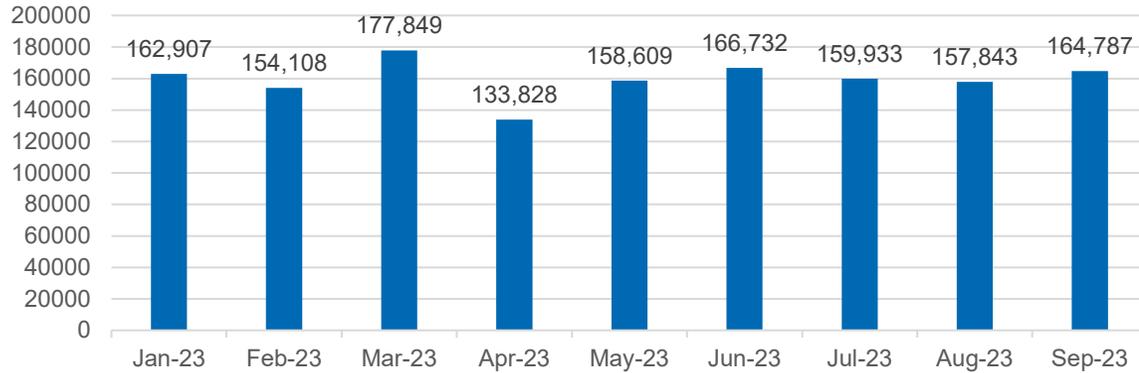
Part 3: Accuracy of recording in appointment books

- Accurately record all appointments, by all relevant roles at PCN and practice level in practice/PCN appointment books
- Utilise relevant National General Practice Appointment Data categories (GPAD)



General Practice Appointment Data (GPAD)

Sandwell Appointments by month (all practice staff and all appointment types)

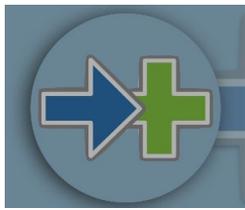


- Across BC ICB 42.71% of appt's were same day in Sep 2023, this is more than the national average (39.7%). **In Sep 2023 Sandwell Place had 44% appt's on the same day.**
- Across BC ICB 73.67% of appt's were F2F, this is higher than the national average of 70.7% for Sep 2023. **In Sandwell Place 68.13% of all appt's were F2F**
- Across BC ICB 47.76% of all appts in Sep 23 were carried out by a GP, this is above the national average of 43.9%. **Sandwell Place had 48.39% of appointments with a GP**

BC ICB System GP Rate per 1000 compared to Sandwell



- In comparison to the other Black Country places, Sandwell has
 - lower total workforce WTEs per 100,000
 - larger population
 - higher deprivation



Community Pharmacists (CPs)

A valuable resource in supporting patient care across our communities providing an alternative location from which patients can seek advice and treatment, rather than via a prescription from their GP, OOH provider, walk in centre or A&E

- **Flu and COVID Vaccination Service**

- Aims to sustain and maximise uptake of vaccinations in at risk groups

- **Pharmacy First Minor Ailment Service**

- 47 out of 80 pharmacies provide this service in Sandwell
- Offers access to self-care advice for the treatment of common ailments
- Where appropriate, patients exempt from prescription charges can be supplied with over-the-counter medicines at NHS expense
- From **April to September 2023** the service treated an average of **1650** patients per month in Sandwell
- Further details: [Your local pharmacy :: Black Country ICB](#)

- **Community Pharmacist Consultation Service being gradually introduced**

- Will offer access to a same day appointment for a range of minor illnesses or an urgent supply of regular medicine
 - Offer face-to-face or remote consultation with a pharmacist following initial assessment by NHS111
 - Receive referrals from GP, Urgent Treatment Centres and Emergency Departments

- **Further developments as part of the Recovery Plan**

- Extending Pharmacy First Service to enable supply of prescription only medicines to treat seven common illnesses (sinusitis, sore throat, earache, infected insect bite, impetigo, shingles and uncomplicated urinary tract infections in women)
- Enhancing the existing hypertension service to increase blood pressure checks undertaken by community pharmacists
- Enabling community pharmacies to initiate ongoing oral contraception for women (*currently can only be initiated by GP*)
- Improving the digital infrastructure between general practice and community pharmacy

Communications

- The ICB communications team are working closely with Black Country primary care leads to promote the new extended healthcare teams to increase awareness and improve patient satisfaction.
- Activity includes:
 - An online resource page for our partner organisations and GP practices to share on their channels, including video content and social assets [online resource page](#)
 - A press release issued to local media [Extended Healthcare Teams in GP Practices](#), featured in the Express & Star. You can [read the Express and Star article here](#).
 - Social media campaign
 - Dedicated page on ICB website [Primary Care is open and here for you page](#)
 - Promotion via and primary care newsletters, as well as digital screens in practices

Public and Patient Involvement

- An Ambassadors' Scheme is in early stages of development to reach and host conversations with people and communities across the Black Country focusing on those who our communications typically wouldn't reach
- The aim is to work with local networks and community groups to co-produce tailored assets and materials to share key messages about the changes and the benefits of our extended healthcare teams



What to do if your experience is not positive

- We know there is variation between practices, and we are working to better understand these and identify where we might provide more support
- No patient should experience poor service - if you are unhappy with your experience, talk to your practice manager in the first instance and follow their complaints process
- Your practice manager must provide you with information about how to escalate your complaint if you don't feel it has been resolved.
- You can also contact our Time2Talk customer care team:
 - Telephone: 0121 612 4110
 - Email: bcicb.time2talk@nhs.net
 - Post: Time2Talk, Black Country ICB, Civic Centre, St. Peters Square, Wolverhampton, WV1 1SH

Summary

- There is a national direction to transform and modernise primary care
- Changes have already started to happen but completing the transformation will take time
- Residents have access to wider general practice teams and primary care is already offering more direct patient care appointments than ever
- Those that prefer to use digital platforms are encouraged to do so to free up the demand via more traditional routes of access to help tackle the 8am rush
- Other services such as community pharmacies are starting to widen their offer and residents are encouraged to access these services as an alternative to general practice
- Alongside national campaigns the ICB will be doing more localised ones, including some targeted public involvement and communications