

Foreword

Include foreword here.

“The power of community to create health is far greater than any physician, clinic or hospital.”

Mark Hyman MD

Section 1

About Sandwell

Who are our people?

Sandwell is located within the heart of the West Midlands, comprising the six towns: Oldbury, Rowley Regis, Smethwick, Tipton, West Bromwich and Wednesbury. According to the latest population estimates from the Office of National Statistics, Sandwell has a population of around 341,900. Approximately 27% (93,200) of these are children and young people aged under 19, and 15% (49,700) are 65 and over.

Sandwell’s population size has increased by 11.0% over the last decade, from around 308,100 in 2011 to 341,900 in 2021. This is higher than the overall increase for England (6.6%) and reflects more rapid growth among children and working age adults, meaning that our population is ageing less quickly than in other parts of the country. Sandwell is also ethnically diverse, with 34% of residents from black and minority ethnic communities, the same as that of the West Midlands and higher than the regional England average of 20%.

Our place

As part of the Black Country, the borough has a proud industrial heritage. The local area’s economy was historically based on its rich coal and ironstone reserves, experiencing major industrial growth following the development of the canal network during the 18th century.

Sandwell has a unique position within the region of being ‘landlocked’ by other urban local authority areas, bordering with Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Dudley and Walsall. Despite the industrial environment and the challenges this brings, the borough has a wealth of parks and green spaces and has achieved 14 prestigious Green Flag awards.

Sandwell’s rich industrial heritage and cultural diversity are key strengths and community assets which can be developed through place-based approaches to improving the wider determinants of health. The six towns each have their own distinct cultures, identities and demographics despite common factors across the borough.

Health inequalities

Sandwell is characterised by rich cultural diversity and vibrant communities but faces considerable socioeconomic challenges and health inequalities too.

Sandwell was ranked as the 8th most deprived Local Authority out of 317 in England (ONS Indices of Deprivation 2019). Life expectancy at birth in Sandwell is 76.1 years for males and 80.7 years for females compared to 79.4 for males and 83.1 for females in England. Our residents also spend more years in poor health. Healthy life expectancy at birth is 61.6 years for males and 60.5 for females (63.1 and 63.9 years in England respectively).¹ A high proportion of Sandwell residents work in healthcare, manufacturing or retail, and the borough has the poorest air quality outside London.

Overall levels of socioeconomic deprivation and inequalities in physical and mental health have meant that the area has been among those hit hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic, austerity and climate change. It is therefore even more important that agencies work together to provide **the right care, to the right people, at the right time and in the right place.**

Partnership working

Collaboration is key to achieving better health and wellbeing in Sandwell and will be facilitated by the Sandwell Health & Wellbeing Board and the Sandwell Health and Social Care Partnership. This means collaborating with professional organisations such as the NHS as well as collaborating with people in our communities.

The **Sandwell Health & Wellbeing Board** is a statutory committee made up of councillors, local GPs, council officers and members from the faith and voluntary community sector. The board has been transforming into a place that welcomes local community groups to share their stories and experiences. Hearing the real voices of local people brought the meetings to life and inspired board members to take action. By showcasing the work being done on the ground alongside the strategies behind it, the board has generated new ideas and in-depth discussions for plans in the future, knowing that local people can genuinely benefit.

The **Sandwell Health & Social Care Partnership** brings professional agencies and the voluntary & community sector together in a slightly different way. This is a space where they can design new ways of working and new approaches to address system wide problems. As a subgroup of the wider Black Country Integrated Care Board, the main focus is on reducing health inequalities. The Partnership brings together Public Health and Adult Social Care partners with those from Primary Care, Secondary Care, Mental Health, Learning Disability and the Voluntary & Community sector.

This Partnership brings together the strengths of each of the two boards, with the Sandwell Health & Social Care Partnership looking into the system to innovate, and the Sandwell Health & Wellbeing Board looking out to engage communities. We also link with the Sandwell Children's Safeguarding

¹ Source: Public Health Outcomes Framework

Board, Sandwell Safeguarding Adults Board, and the Safer Sandwell Partnership to achieve our strategic objectives.

Picture from Sandwell Health and Wellbeing Board, Holly's Race and SDCA logo

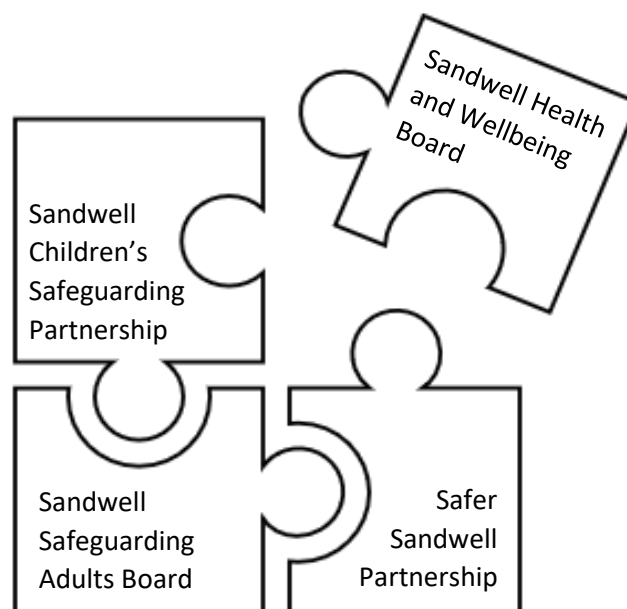
The Health and Wellbeing Strategy

This Strategy is jointly owned by both boards. The next section will look back at some of our recent work, showing how we work together and what we have achieved, and some of the challenges we have faced.

Section 3 will look forward, describing our shared outcomes and joint workstreams across the system. Here we will explain how we will measure and monitor what we achieve.

The Strategy is not an exhaustive account of our work, but an illustration of how partnership working can help to improve the health and wellbeing of people in Sandwell.

The purpose of this strategy is not to overlap with other strategies from key boards and partnerships but to demonstrate where the pieces fit together. We recognise that there will be some crossover in interest in the work done by other boards and that not everything can be included in this strategy. Rather than duplicating that work, our aim is to look at how we can link together to improve the health and wellbeing of people in Sandwell.



Section 2

How we work

In Sandwell we seek to improve health and wellbeing by doing our work *with* our residents and not to them. At the core of our work is our community, those with gifts and skills and local knowledge. We recognise that the people in Sandwell are its asset and the experts on what they need. By working with our residents, we can build on our existing community strengths, and develop solutions where there are gaps. By investing time and money into our communities we can create environments where Sandwell residents can thrive and help each other, which will reduce demand on some services and in turn improve health outcomes. We take this approach across a wide range of public health priorities and outcomes including during the Covid19 pandemic, our drugs and alcohol work, physical activity and more.

COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought challenges for physical and mental health, both from the direct effects of the virus and indirectly through social and economic impacts on people's lives. It has changed the way traditionally close communities interact, and how residents access help and support. Existing inequalities in Sandwell, and in the West Midlands and England overall, have been deepened. The lifestyles of people in Sandwell were more susceptible to the virus, as an area that has many people working in sectors where social distancing wasn't possible, so it had the potential to spread fast and wide.

Sandwell was one of the first Councils to establish a local Contact Tracing team alongside the national Test and Trace function. Our innovative model was cited as an example of best practice by the Local Government Association and was replicated by almost every Council in the country. We developed a supportive offer in partnership with the voluntary and community sector whilst also recruiting internal staff across departments to assist with the emergency response.

By understanding the Black Country culture and offering a familiar voice or language over the phone, we were able to increase engagement and reach more local people. In the last week prior to the launch of this service in July 2020, the national contact tracing service was failing to reach over 35% of COVID-19 contacts in Sandwell. This was the second worst performing local authority in the West Midlands region. One year after the launch of the Sandwell service the failure rate had reduced to less than 4% of contacts. Compared to the rest of the West Midlands, this was the best performance in the region of any upper tier local authority.

In addition, Sandwell ranked 80th out of 149 upper tier local authorities for infection rates and had the 3rd lowest case rates in the Black Country, just after Dudley. This in stark contrast to what would be expected given the levels of deprivation in the borough and can be largely attributed to putting our community at the heart of the response and adapting support where it was needed. There is nevertheless no doubt that the pandemic has been devastating for many individuals, families and communities, and has left a legacy of health needs and economic impacts.

Graph from Facebook

We know that Sandwell is rich in community assets, and this was brought to the forefront during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our community and faith leaders continued to support residents with key information to help them keep safe during unprecedented times - often working with groups who were more vulnerable to COVID-19 and less able to access this information themselves. Despite having to completely change the way they interacted, from face-to-face to virtual and over the phone, they maintained contact with those who needed support. As the pandemic developed, our local community groups continued to adapt to ensure continued access and provide information around vaccinations.

In 2021 we won the Local Government Chronical Award for our work to increase vaccination uptake in the borough, with a particular focus on black, Asian and minority ethnic groups, which traditionally have lower vaccination uptake rates. We worked in partnership with NHS and voluntary and faith organisations to provide vaccination clinics in mosques, gurdwaras, community centres and other venues, and with the Sandwell 'Vaccination Bus' at The Hawthorns Stadium. The public health team also trained influential people in the community to support people to get vaccinated. The 'Community Vaccination Leaders' course trained around 180 local people including faith leaders, community organisers and voluntary sector workers. The course proved so popular that other council teams in the UK came to Sandwell to learn how to deliver the course in their areas.

The Vision 2030 COVID-19 grants enabled groups to identify what was needed in their communities and put the right support in place. With over £250,000 grant funded to more than 25 community groups a huge range of tasks were completed, and support was given; proactive writing and calling to service users, social media coverage, 1 on 1 and group conversations and support, translation of guidance and culturally appropriate messaging, practical support to access vaccinations, vaccination champions and promotion of vaccination clinics.

"Feedback from parent carers was very positive. Many said they were anxious about the vaccine but that the information we were able to provide was factual and timely and allowed them to make informed decisions. We were also able to provide information on vaccine clinics, pop ups and opportunities through pharmacies etc that families were not aware of. Parent carers were also able to register with their GP as a carer which will have longer term benefits for them and their healthcare."

"Focus groups created some change in understanding and attitude towards the vaccinations. The involvement of our 2 vaccine champions, Kurdish medical professionals and the Romanian health professional in RUDA's Facebook live session was extremely helpful in addressing some of the myths around vaccines."

Drugs and Alcohol

The young person's substance misuse service (DECCA) is commissioned by Sandwell Public Health and based in Sandwell Children's Trust. The service consists of three elements – universal prevention, early intervention and specialist treatment. Interventions that contribute to reducing admissions include work with education services to ensure young people are aware of the risks of substances, training for professionals to be confident when having conversations and providing accessible, non-time limited specialist treatments.

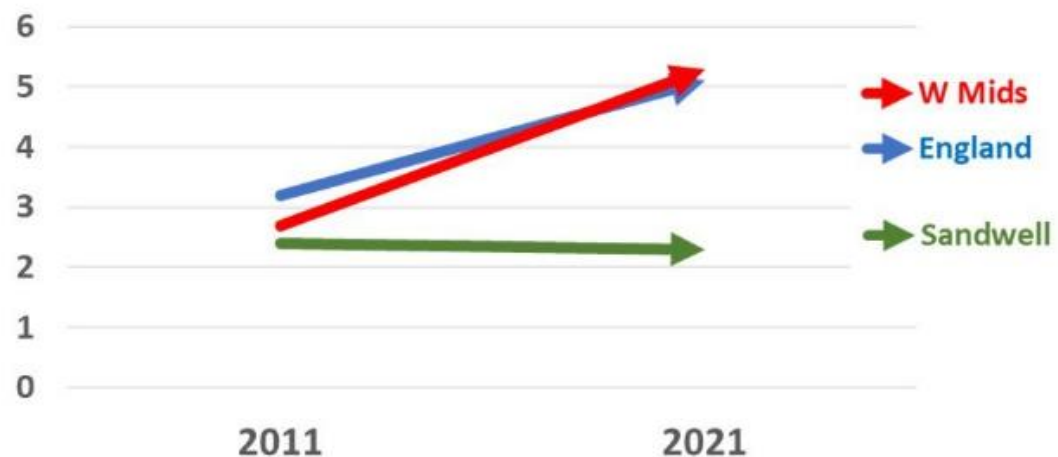
Continuity of care between prison and community substance misuse services is vital for improving offender health, reducing drug and alcohol related harm and reducing reoffending. Rates of continuity

of care in Sandwell are higher than both the regional and national averages. Effective partnership working and communication between probation services, prison healthcare, Sandwell’s substance misuse services and wraparound support such as housing plays a key role in successful outcomes for this group. Timely access to services is also vital and in Sandwell Cranstoun are able to offer appointments on the day of release where required.

In Sandwell we stick to the five principals on drug harm reduction. These include a holistic approach of wrap around support with housing, finance, legal problems, physical and mental health and social relationships. We also ensure we maintain our partnerships, as without a strong link between prison staff and the drug treatment teams there are gaps our residents could fall through. Cranstoun, as previously mentioned, are the third part of our principals, their first-class treatment using expertise and commitment through every level of staff from commissioner to the provider ensures that everyone’s needs are met. By taking the work to the people who need it rather than waiting for them to come to us we make sure life-saving naloxone and other interventions are provided in the place and at the right time. Finally, maintaining investment in these resources over the years has ensured a continued level of support and the ongoing support from stakeholders from seeing the cost-effective treatment reduce demand on other systems and services. Thanks to this approach we have achieved the lowest drug related deaths in the West Midlands and are within the lowest ten in the country.

Drug Related Deaths

Rate per 100k population (ONS, 2022)



Graph showing change in drug related deaths over last 10 years



Most prisoners who need drug treatment on release don't get it - but one council bucks the trend

A local authority has one of the best rates of engagement in the country, with 62% of prison leavers who need drug treatment receiving vital help. But how is Sandwell, a place with high rates of poverty offering people a lifeline?



Inzamam Rashid
News correspondent @inzyrashid

Friday 22 July 2022 01:25, UK



Screenshot from sky news article

Better Mental Health Programme

Last year Sandwell Council successfully secured £391,272 of funding for the Better Mental Health Programme. The Better Mental Health Programme works alongside community partners to develop exciting and innovative projects to improve mental wellbeing for the whole community. These projects recognise the importance that good mental health has to our overall wellbeing. Strong established relationships between Sandwell Council and the voluntary & community sector have been key to the success of the programme, providing the ideal opportunity to build on our unique assets and work with communities to reduce inequalities in mental health and wellbeing that were made worse by the pandemic. Our Better Mental Health programme is informed by what our communities have told us they need and what is important to them.

Ten diverse and unique projects to improve mental wellbeing were rolled out to the community as part of the programme. These were:

1. **Changes** – offers support for parents, helping them to navigate on their parenting journey through a range of activities. This project has enabled a wider choice of Early Years, Primary School Years and Secondary School Years courses to be offered for Sandwell parents to join.
2. **Activities for New and Expectant Parents** – provides free activities to promote physical health during pregnancy, selfcare and mindfulness, develop new friendships and peer support. Better Mental Health project funding has enabled a wide variety of activities and courses to be held in Sandwell's 6 towns.

3. **Sandwell Libraries and Archives** – libraries provide a safe and inclusive community hub. This project aims at providing parents and carers of under 5's with a range of social activities such as Play Talk Read and the Sandy Bear Scheme.

4. **Anti-bullying** - Children and young people in Sandwell have repeatedly highlighted bullying, including cyberbullying, as a key mental health issue. We are working to tackling this by delivering a whole school antibullying intervention and activities such as online training and classroom-based input. We're building on initiatives such as the successful Anti-Bullying Roadshow delivered during Anti-Bullying Week 2020 and adopting a whole-school approach to raising awareness for children and young people, teachers, parents and wider communities.

5. **The Voluntary and Community Sector Well-being Charter Mark** - Having successfully embedded the Schools' Wellbeing Charter Mark to adopt a whole school approach to mental health improvement across Sandwell, we aim to extend this throughout the community and voluntary sector in the hope to build emotional resilience by engaging in hobbies, interests and communities.

6. **Team Talk Albion** - The project aims to engage men (aged 18+) living in Sandwell with weekly 5 a side football matches located at the Portway Lifestyle Centre aiming to improve health and wellbeing through football.

7. **Tough Enough to Care** – These sessions include a 45-minute interactive presentation covering mental health basics and dispelling common myths about mental illness. The project also includes peer support groups which are open to all men aged 18+ from the Sandwell area.

8. **Ideal for All** - Supporting minority ethnic communities through targeted peer support, information and activity sessions. This project offers befriending and improved mental wellbeing through gardening and companionship.

9. **Mental Health Literacy** - This project has 3 elements, the first being i-act Understanding & Promoting Positive Mental Health & Wellbeing training courses. The next is the development of Community Mental Health Champions who can help raise awareness of mental health and challenge stigma within their respective communities. The last is through the charity Kaleidoscope Plus Group who have been delivering accredited courses such as the popular Mental Health First Aid course.

10. **Community Mental Health Grant Programme** - A grant programme focusing on promoting positive community mental health with funding being available to support activities that are run by local people for local people.

By the end of March 2022, a total of 1,402 unique beneficiaries had been reached, with a significant improvement in self-rated wellbeing among those participating in the programme. Projects have been very well received in our communities, and feedback from participants and service users highlighted social connection, improved confidence and wider wellbeing as key benefits. The success of Sandwell's Better Mental Health Programme to date gives us strong foundations to build on sustain its legacy, both through increased capacity in the voluntary & community sector and additional funding to continue and expand the programme.

“Sandwell Council has a strong track record of working closely with the voluntary and community sector, and their Better Mental Health programme is a clear example of asset-based community development in action. Feedback to date has been very positive and not only demonstrates immediate benefits of support for clients and community groups, but also a longer-term legacy for mental wellbeing promotion and reducing inequalities in mental health”.

- *Paul Sanderson, Health & Wellbeing Programme Lead, OHID West Midlands*

“I am getting my confidence back as a mother because I am able to stay calm and talk to my kids instead of shouting at them and telling them off. We now discuss problems instead.”

“I loved learning new things. I've had the confidence to attend other courses and the library.”

- *Feedback from parents, Changes Antenatal and Library Project*

“The project has helped us to reach a much wider and more diverse audience that we may not have really crossed paths with if we weren't involved in this project. The links we have established throughout Sandwell have not only helped us to grow as a charity but we are now in a much stronger position to support others and it has confirmed our thoughts that people do want to talk about mental health in Sandwell, but they never really had an outlet, this project has allowed us to become a route for these discussions and has helped 100 s of local residents”.

- *Stu Bratt, CEO, Tough Enough to Care*

Commonwealth Games

Sandwell was proud to host the swimming and diving events for the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games in Sandwell. The Sandwell Aquatics Centre is a world-class sporting facility that will benefit Sandwell people for decades to come when it becomes a public leisure centre in spring 2023 following the Games.

We have welcomed thousands of athletes and spectators over the summer, giving us the perfect opportunity to show what a friendly and diverse place Sandwell is on the world's stage. It has been a great time to celebrate our rich diversity, culture and heritage.

The new leisure centre is bringing to Sandwell a 50m Olympic-sized swimming pool, 25m diving pool, community swimming pool, activity studios, sports halls, gyms, cycling studio, dry diving centre, sauna, football pitch, urban park, children's play area and café. This will be a place where local people will gain immeasurable health, fitness and social benefits and where everyone is welcome and able to access activities that are suitable for them.

We now have a task to build and create a legacy from the Commonwealth Games with our residents to get people, especially young people into physical activity. We have already started to invest more into free swimming, now over £300,000 per year will be spent on free access to swimming as well as swimming lessons in Sandwell.

Pictures of Aquatic Centre and local athlete's success

Physical Activity

The latest Sport England survey shows that children in Sandwell are on average the most active in the West Midlands and fourth most active in England. The Active Lives Children and Young People Survey by Sport England looked at what proportion of children aged 5 to 16 are meeting the national physical activity guidelines of an average of at least 60 minutes moderate-vigorous intensity exercise per day. The percentage of Sandwell's children meeting physical activity guidelines has risen significantly over the last four years, to the current high position in 2020/21 with 59.7% of children meeting the target despite the disruption of the pandemic.

We are currently working with activity groups across all six towns, covering a range of activities such as; dance, football, martial arts, basketball, cricket, swimming, gymnastics, athletics and many more! It is important to maintain these activity levels throughout the life course to help reduce the risk of some major illnesses and as we know physical activity can help improve our mood, sleep quality and reduce risks of stress. We have ongoing work with adults to help them increase their physical activity levels and maintain them. From the Covid19 pandemic many people became more familiar and reliant on parks and green spaces, because of this we will have new activities happening across all of the towns for adults to engage with their local spaces and ensure they get the most out of it. In addition, we are working to increase cycling opportunities across the borough, so people not only feel more confident on a bike but are also able to access bikes locally to them.

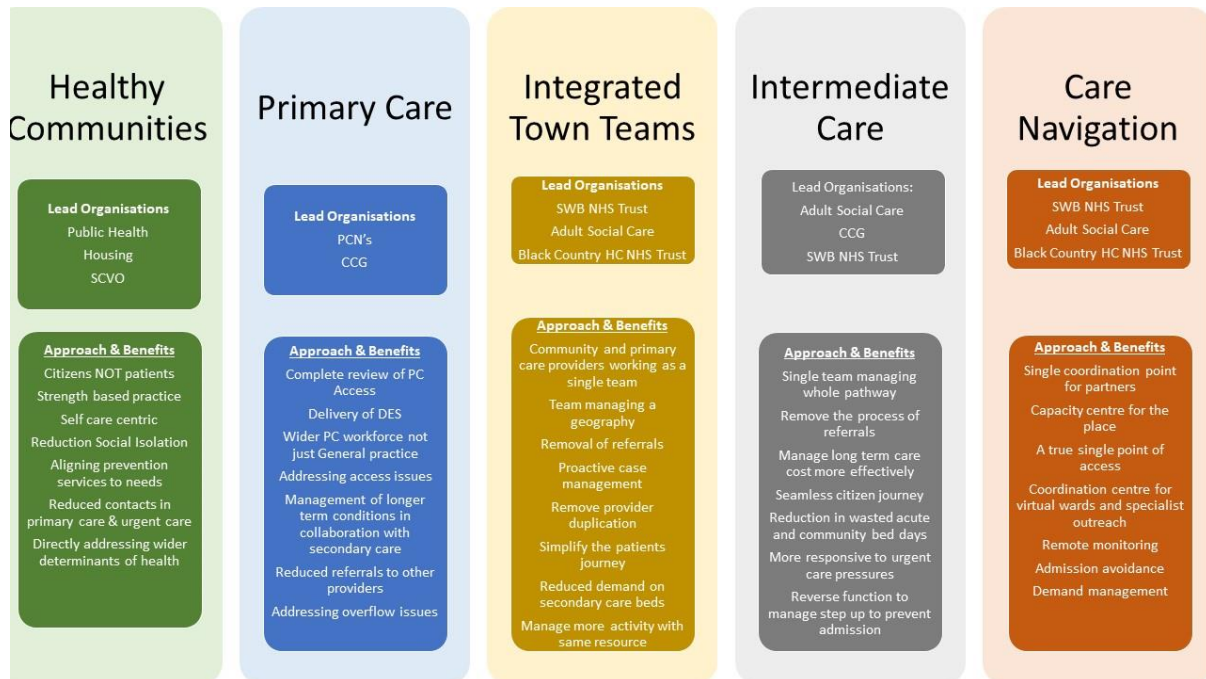
There are already some great projects happening in Sandwell allowing children, young people and families to get involved with different activities such as cycling. The Sandwell Valley Explorer, a short family friendly guided bike ride for all abilities is just the beginning of our cycling work. Benson Community Project is also offering family bike rides and learn to ride sessions in Smethwick. This is providing a great way to learn new skills, help others and get more active. Led rides are also already running at Lightwoods Park, but we are also exploring opportunities to train more volunteers to help run similar activities across other areas of Sandwell. Cradley Community Link are one such group looking to train young people as some cycle champions to not only lead rides but also share skills on how to look after a bike.

Picture from cycling groups

Section 3

This section is about looking forward and setting out our shared outcomes and joint workstreams across the system.

The figure below shows how each workstream contributes to our place-based approach to improving population health and wellbeing, and the lead organisations within each workstream.



The Joint Outcomes Framework sets out the priority outcomes for each organisation which will support the delivery of these workstreams and enable us to monitor our progress.

Joint Outcome Framework - Outcomes	
Organisation	Outcome
Adult Social Care	Further promotion of 'Home First' to support people to promote independent living at home
Adult Social Care	Workforce strategy
Adult Social Care	Asset/ strength- based practice
Adult Social Care	Having a strong community offer that improves and supports prevention
Adult Social Care	Improve the digital tools to allow for greater choice and independence for residents to remain in their own homes longer
Adult Social Care	Managing the market to ensure customers have a choice of quality and affordable providers to meet their care and support needs
Black Country Partnership	Estimated diagnosis rate for people with dementia
Black Country Partnership	Dementia care plan reviews
Black Country Partnership	People with severe mental illness (SMI) receiving a full annual physical health check (PHC)
Black Country Partnership	Learning disability registers and annual health checks delivered by GPs
Children's Services	Domestic abuse- children, victims and perpetrators
Children's Services	CYP SEND, Mental Health and Wellbeing
Children's Services	Early help- early intervention and prevention aligned to family hubs model
Children's Services	CYP Educational attainment inc. a focus on NEET for care leavers (19+) and Early Years, language development a step on from EYTA work
Children's Services	The youth offer aligned with wider regeneration opportunities to include employment and skills alongside apprenticeships
Children's Services	Preparation for adulthood - supporting the transitions between children and adults
Primary Care Network	Improve the diagnosis of patients with hypertension by 1.2% from current baseline
Primary Care Network	80% of all women have had screening for cervical cancer within the last 3 years if aged between 25-49 years and last 5 years if aged between 50-64 years
Primary Care Network	All care home residents will have personalised care and support plans agreed or reviewed at least annually at a MDT.
Primary Care Network	90% patient eligible for influenza and pneumococcal immunisations will have received their vaccinations
Primary Care Network	95% of all children will have received vaccinations as per the National childhood immunisation schedule as appropriate to their age
Public Health	Reduce Smoking Related Harm
Public Health	Reduce Alcohol Related Harm
Public Health	Reduce Drug Related Harm
Public Health	Reduce Obesity Related Harm
Public Health	Public Health Support to the Voluntary Sector
Public Health	Public Health Support to Infants
Sandwell Council of Voluntary Organisations	Strong and responsive voluntary and community sector
Sandwell Council of Voluntary Organisations	Making a difference where it's needed by making the most of what Sandwell has
Sandwell Council of Voluntary Organisations	Enabling access to support for all Sandwell Residents

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Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospital Trust	Reduce the total number of hospital bed days for people aged 65 and over
Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospital Trust	% of people achieving their preferred place of death
Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospital Trust	Improve the survival rates for people with a cancer diagnosis
Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospital Trust	Number of urgent (unplanned) readmissions to hospital within 30 days of discharge and benchmark against regional and national data
Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospital Trust	Improve the outcomes for children and young people - best start

“Empowerment of individuals and communities is absolutely central. Getting the community involved in organising their own destiny has got to be a key part of it.”

Sir Michael Marmot