

Primary Care Access Sandwell



Integrated Care Systems (ICSs)

- **April 2022**, the government passed the Health and Care Act 2022, confirming the creation of statutory ICSs
- **1st July 2022**, statutory ICSs arrangements were established, including the establishment of Integrated Care Boards (ICBs)
- The Black Country's ICS, known as Healthier Futures, brings providers and commissioners of NHS services together with local authorities and other local partners to **plan and deliver joined up services** and to **improve the lives of people** who live and work here
- The Black Country ICS is the collective term for the [Integrated Care Board](#) (ICB), [Integrated Care Partnership](#) (ICP), [place-based partnerships](#) and [provider collaboratives](#).
- ICBs have replaced Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) as the statutory NHS organisation, responsible for:
 - Developing plans to meet the health needs of the population
 - Managing the NHS budget and arranging for the provision of health services in the ICS area

Recap on Primary Care

- There are 49 Individual GP Practices delivering core primary care services to a total *registered* population of 366,820 (at June 2022)
- Individual practices serve varying numbers of registered populations, ranging from 2,007 (the smallest practice) to 44,807 (the largest practice)
- Practices are grouped together to form 8 Primary Care Networks – groups of closely connected practices working together with community, mental health, social care, pharmacy, hospital and the voluntary sector to provide a range of services
- The ICB does not run GP practices, these are individual businesses
- ICBs commissions (buys) GP practices to meet the needs of local people
- The regulator for GP practices, like other NHS services, is the Care Quality Commission (CQC)

‘The health and social care system is gridlocked’ (CQC, 2022)

CQC’s State of Care annual assessment of health and social in England confirms what is also being experienced locally across the Black Country

- Waiting lists and waiting times for elective NHS care have significantly increased
- Delays in ambulance response times alongside long waiting times in emergency departments
- Problems accessing primary care
- Higher pressure on urgent and emergency services
- Increased pressure on social care services to enable safe timely discharges
- Public satisfaction with NHS health care and social care has significantly decreased (British Social Attitudes Survey, 2022)
- Widespread staff shortages with struggles to recruit and retain staff are widespread throughout health and care services – this remains the greatest challenge across our sectors

Primary Care Challenges

- Sandwell's population has grown to 341,900 (2021 Census), 11% increase
- GP workforce: the NHS cannot train and recruit GPs quickly enough to keep up with growing demand for their services.
- Greater focus on prevention: modern practice roles/responsibilities include screening, vaccination and social prescribing.
- Managing the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic



Day in the life of a general practice team

- Daily release of appointments to manage same day requests
- Impact of 'Did Not Attend' (DNAs)
- Review and response to clinical letters
- Managing increased complexities of patients
- Managing staff shortages, arranging locums and cover
- Behind the scenes



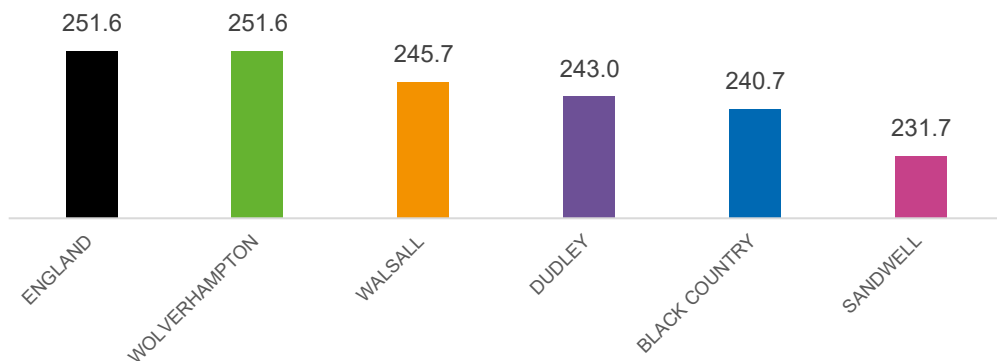
Primary Care Workforce

- Sandwell has a smaller workforce per patient compared to the national average, including fewer GPs and nurses and this has not grown at the rate required to meet the growth in the population
- General practice is stretched beyond capacity and the traditional model is becoming unsustainable
- The primary care offer needs to evolve to increase capacity and provide access to a variety of healthcare professionals

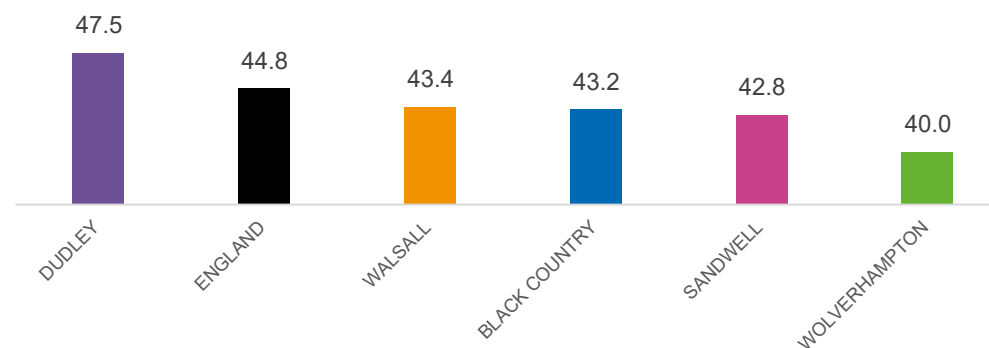
Workforce

The charts below compares each 'Place' in the Black Country to the National average

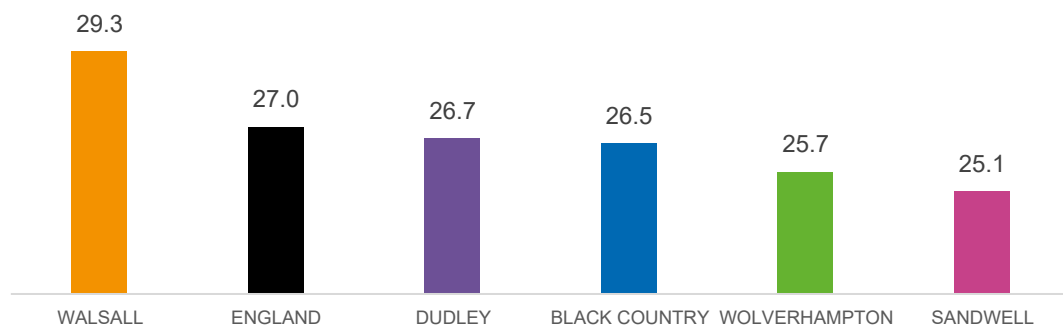
Total Workforce WTEs per 100,000 patients (weighted)



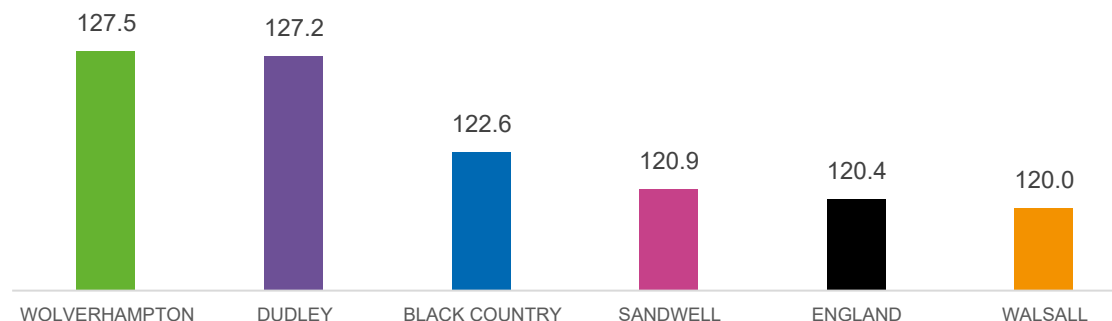
GPs (Excluding Trainees) WTEs per 100,000 patients (weighted)



Nurses WTEs per 100,000 patients (weighted)



Admin WTEs per 100,000 patients (weighted)



Traditional primary care roles

- **General Practice Nurses (GPNs):** Qualified nurses who look after patients with long-term diseases such as asthma and diabetes, offer health screening, and hold specialised clinics such as immunisation, wound care, and women's health.
- **Health Care Assistants (HCAs):** They take on routine tasks previously done by practice nurses, to free up nurse time for more specialised support.
- **Physician Associates (PAs):** Healthcare professionals who work under supervision of a doctor to deliver care and treatment. PAs are medically trained and able to diagnose and treat a range of clinical problems, including making referrals and developing treatment plans for long term conditions.
- **Clinical Pharmacists:** Provide expert advice on medicines, including conducting medication reviews and health checks for people with long term conditions. If you are experiencing side effects from your medicines, or you have a common illness such as a cold or hay fever, you may see the clinical pharmacist instead of your GP.
- **Advanced Clinical Practitioners (ACPs):** These are highly trained and experienced clinicians with backgrounds in nursing, physiotherapy, pharmacy or occupational therapy, who have gained advanced qualifications (such as a Master's degree) and have the skills and experience to prescribe medications, order tests and discuss results, make a diagnosis and create a treatment plan.
- *Plus Nursing Associates, Paramedics, Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists, Podiatrists, and many more...*



Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme (ARRS) funding that is available to Primary Care Networks (PCNs) as part of the Network Contract to support the recruitment of new additional staff to deliver health services

Roles that are covered by the scheme listed below:

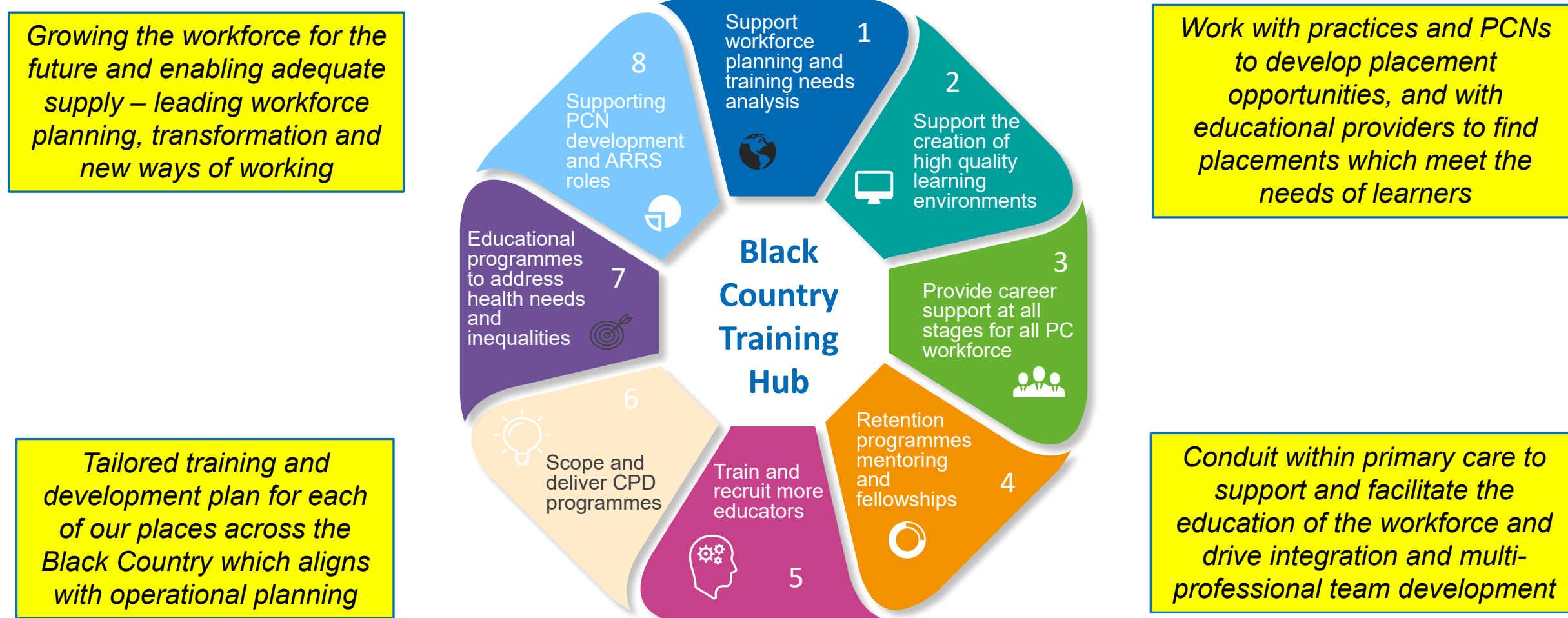
- Clinical pharmacists
 - Pharmacy technicians
 - Social prescribing link worker
 - Health and wellbeing coaches
 - Care co-ordinators
 - Physician associates
 - First contact physiotherapists
 - Dieticians
 - Podiatrists
 - Occupational therapists
 - Nurse Training Associates
 - Nursing Associates
 - Community Paramedics
 - Advanced Practitioners
 - Adult Mental Health Practitioner
 - CYP Mental Health Practitioner
 - *Digital Transformation Lead
 - *GP Assistant
- Some of these roles are already in place across Sandwell with ongoing recruitment plans
 - The highest numbers of ARRS roles currently employed in Sandwell are Pharmacists
 - These roles have significant importance as they are set to change the model of primary care e.g. most appropriate healthcare professional

**New roles included in the scheme from October 2022*



The Black Country Workforce Strategy is supported by the Black Country Training Hub – Key aim is to support the development and growth of the primary care workforce

The diagram illustrates the eight elements of focus. The four yellow boxes highlight the largest areas of focus



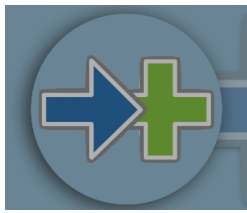
How are we enhancing access

- PCNs already collaborate to provide enhanced access services outside of core practice hours from 6.30pm to 8.00pm Monday to Friday and at weekends
- From 1st October 2022, this has been standardised to include:
 - Offer of appointments from 6.30pm to 8.00pm Monday to Friday, and from 9.00am to 5.00pm on Saturdays
 - Provide 60 mins worth of appointment time per 1,000 population
 - A variety of face to face and remote appointments to be made available utilising the multi-disciplinary team
 - A full range of services to be provided, including clinical risk/priority areas and focus on backlogs resulting from the pandemic
 - Patients able to access appointments for their PCN regardless of site location
 - Mixture of same day and pre-bookable appointments
- Approximately 1,467 appointments will be available across Sandwell during these hours (based on an average of 15 minute appointment slots)



Enhancing the digital offer

- Digital technology is transforming how patients and health professionals interact with services
- This programme supports the transformation of primary care by promoting the implementation, understanding and improvement of digital tools within general practice e.g.
 - Improving websites and utilisation of online services such as, online booking, online contact forms for non-urgent queries or requesting repeat prescriptions, sick notes and test results
 - Online consultation services
 - Transition from traditional “analogue” telephone systems to cloud-based technologies
- The tools can support patient access to appropriate and timely care, help practices better manage demand, and improve patient and staff experience
- Building on the utilisation of the NHS App during the pandemic
- The ICB recognises that the digital solutions may not be the preferred choice for all patients, however by enhancing this access to those that do – this will free up capacity via the more traditional routes e.g. telephone
- The ICB is directly supporting practices and PCNs to progress the opportunities within this programme to ensure consistency in patient access and utilisation of the tools



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

- **Pharmacy First Minor Ailment Service**

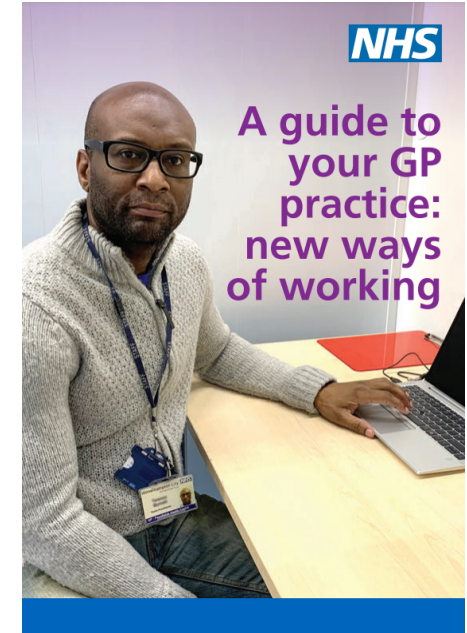
- 43 pharmacies provide this service in Sandwell
- Offers access to self-care advice for the treatment of common ailments
- Where appropriate, patients exempt from prescription charges can be supplied with over-the-counter medicines at NHS expense
- From August to October 2022 the service treated an average of **2215** patients per month in Sandwell
- Further details: <https://www.blackcountryandwestbirmccg.nhs.uk/your-health-services/health-services/pharmacy-first>

- **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
- Improve access to services and provide more convenient treatment closer to patients' homes
- 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

Communications and engagement

- The ICB actively promotes appropriate use of primary care, directing demand to other services where appropriate and raising awareness of new ways of working.
 - Our [Guide to your GP practice: New ways of working](#) has been shared across GP practices and on social media.
- During summer there was an increased focus on raising awareness of practice multi-disciplinary Teams (MDTs). The following videos have been produced and shared widely via local partners and in social media:
 - Receptionist: <https://youtu.be/LijNu2ph9Nk>
 - Social prescriber: https://youtu.be/nXsV_SybEe8
 - Physician Associate: <https://youtu.be/BmPFvCEQcW0>
- Further videos are in production and a general press release about practice MDTs is planned for this month.
- Each Bank Holiday, extended access arrangements and pharmacy opening hours are routinely communicated via [press release](#), social media, and cascade to local partners. GPs receive a toolkit to support them to communicate the most up to date information about out of hours provision to their patients
- A suite of communications has been developed with advice on self-care for a variety of common ailments. These are shared with system partners via a weekly communications toolkit, and regular press releases and accompanying social media posts are issued on these topics, for example this [recent guidance on insect bites and stings](#)
- The ICB has a friendly customer service team, who actively monitor correspondence and social media, and manage individual enquiries from local people on a daily basis



What to do if your experience is not positive

- We know there is variation between practices
- We are working to more fully 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

- Support residents to access alternative support where appropriate e.g. Community Pharmacy
- Those that are able to utilise the digital offer
- Continue to support the integration of services for improving outcomes for Sandwell residents
- At the last Scrutiny Committee for Primary Care Access a joint task force was agreed to look at ways in which to communicate the message to Sandwell residents about the variety of ways in which primary care services can be accessed
 - This has been achieved by the Sandwell Health and Care Partnership's Communication Network