




Wednesday 13 March 2024

<b>Subject:</b>	Public Health Sandwell Communication Guide
<b>Presenting Officer and Organisation</b>	Rebecca Down Sandwell Council <a href="mailto:Rebecca_Down@sandwell.gov.uk">Rebecca_Down@sandwell.gov.uk</a>   Diane Millichamp Sandwell Council <a href="mailto:Diane_Millichamp@sandwell.gov.uk">Diane_Millichamp@sandwell.gov.uk</a>
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	Information

### 1. Recommendations

1.1 That the Board notes and endorses current progress on implementing of the Sandwell Language initiative and the steps towards implementing that initiative through the Public Health Sandwell Communication Guide and Plain English Guide.

### 2. Links to Workstreams Set out in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy

<b>Healthy Communities</b>	Social isolation and community development
<b>Primary Care</b>	Workforce planning
<b>Integrated Town Teams</b>	Proactively supports high risk citizens supported by the use of population health data
<b>Intermediate Care</b>	
<b>Care Navigation</b>	

### 3. Context and Key Issues

3.1 88% of Sandwell residents speak English as their main language, compared to 92.3% nationally. This proportion varies by ward, and in five wards less than 80% of residents speak English as their main language.

- 3.2 By focusing on the top four languages after English; Panjabi, Polish, Bengali and Urdu we could reach an extra 10.1% of our population in Sandwell. *ONS 2021 Census*
- 3.3 30.3% cannot speak English well or cannot speak English at all. *ONS 2021 Census*
- 3.4 Data released by the Learning and Work Institute in June 2022 shows Sandwell has the lowest literacy levels compared to other Local Authorities in the West Midlands area. It also shows Sandwell to have one of the lowest literacy levels in England.
- 3.5 In 2021, almost 30% of Sandwell residents aged 16 and over (28.9%, 76,840) reported having no qualifications. This is much higher than the England and Wales figure of 18.2%.
- 3.6 January 2022 Census identified that 60% of pupils in secondary schools are from Ethnic Minority Communities (EMC) compared to 36% nationally. In secondary schools 30% of our Young People identify English as an additional language (EAL) compared to 18% nationally.

#### 4. Engagement

- Work done through the Sandwell Language Network highlighted that the use of English at certain levels was missing the target audience.
- Learnings from Public Health interventions i.e. Covid19 highlighted the positive impact of translations on delivery and uptake of service models.
- Developed the input of documents with assistance from community members as well as evidence and information found around translations of text from English to other languages.

#### 5. Implications

<b>Resources:</b>	Awarded £100,000 by the ICB for development of Health Literacy work. All work undertaken by Public Health staff who are involved in community development projects.
<b>Legal and Governance:</b>	No statutory requirements but Government communication guidelines are followed.
<b>Risk:</b>	The risk lies in poor application of Public Health services should this recommendation not be implemented.

<b>Equality:</b>	We already have high health inequalities in Sandwell and if we do not act to minimise these then we risk worsening these outcomes.
<b>Health and Wellbeing:</b>	The health and wellbeing of a large percentage of the community will be influenced by having access to healthcare through language.
<b>Social Value:</b>	Will improve social values for several parts of our community.
<b>Climate Change:</b>	None
<b>Corporate Parenting:</b>	The lack of access to healthcare will increase if we are unable to communicate with young people and care leavers so that they are enabled in accessing the right services at the right time.

## 6. Appendices

Public Health Sandwell Communication Guide  
Plain English Guide  
Sandwell Language Provision in Public Health

## 7. Background Papers

Understanding the impact of COVID-19 on BAME communities -  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-understanding-the-impact-on-bame-communities>

Stakeholder consultation: Language and communication needs assessment -  
[https://www.wmsmp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Stakeholder-consultation\\_language-and-communication-service-needs-assessment-1-1.pdf](https://www.wmsmp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Stakeholder-consultation_language-and-communication-service-needs-assessment-1-1.pdf)