

Report to Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board

30 September 2024

Subject:	Communicating Changes to Healthcare in Sandwell
Director:	Liann Brookes- Smith Interim Director of Public Health
Contact Officer:	John Swann Democratic Services Officer

1 Recommendation

To consider and comment upon the approach to communicating changes to healthcare in Sandwell.

2 Reasons for Recommendation

- 2.1 The Board should be consulted on all important changes to healthcare provision within the Borough.
- 2.2 To seek the input and contributions on how we might continue to raise awareness and encourage local people to use services appropriately.

3 How does this deliver objectives of the Council Plan?

One Council One Team	Ensuring the Borough's population is in good health and has access to high quality medical care supports all the objectives of the Council Plan.
Living in Sandwell	
Thriving Economy in Sandwell	
Growing Up in Sandwell	
Healthy in Sandwell	When changes to healthcare provision are made it is vital that this is effectively communicated to residents.

4 Context and Key Issues

- 4.1 Healthcare provision in Sandwell has recently undergone and continues to undergo a period of change. Of particular note are:
- The forthcoming opening of the new Midland Metropolitan University Hospital (MMUH) Development.
 - The reorganising of outpatient care across the NHS estate in Sandwell.
 - The changes to the Urgent Treatment Centre and Sandwell Health Campus.
 - The Closure of Hawes Lane GP Surgery.
- 4.2 It is important to equip local people with the knowledge to understand how to access a variety of healthcare types, know where to go in an emergency and what to do when a service closes or operates differently.
- 4.3 It is recognised that certain demographics may be harder to reach than others – for example those who do not speak English as a first language. For this reason, it is good practice to ensure that key messaging and communication in relations to changes in healthcare provision are designed to reach as many people as possible.
- 4.4 **Midland Metropolitan University Hospital and Sandwell Health Campus Communications Strategy**

Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust have been engaging local people and patients throughout the course of the programme to build the new Midland Metropolitan Hospital.

In August 2024 the Trust received the keys to the new Hospital in Smethwick and made the decision that it would be ready to open on 6 October 2024.

Recognising the need for an intense period of communication with local people, to ensure they were aware of the date for service change, a communications campaign was planned.

Planning started in June this year with research conducted to inform the work. The research survey which had 1340 respondents (838 visitors to the closing Emergency Departments (Eds/ A and Es) and 498 from a representative sample of the catchment population) showed that whilst sentiment towards the changes was positive, awareness of MMUH opening was low. It confirmed that travel to MMUH was a key area of interest and that it was needed to raise awareness of Urgent Treatment Centres too.

Whilst the low awareness was understood to be an area that could build relatively quickly, given the phased nature of service moves, the different planned mapping of service flows and the low awareness, the communications needed to be nuanced concentrated messaging in key areas.

A creative, data-led campaign to drive behaviour change and ensure awareness of the numerous changes involved in the move is vital to patient and public awareness of their services locally. It will also provide some reassurance across the wider system as we start to understand the changes in patient flows once MMUH is open.

The aims of the campaign are to ensure the population understands:-

1. MMUH is opening on October 6th – Sandwell move first (and other subsequent moves)
2. Where to go to receive the right care, at the right time, in the right place for emergency treatment, Urgent Treatment Centre facilities and the services in the community that can help them stay well.
3. That outpatient and elective care will remain on the City and Sandwell Health Campuses.

Ensuring that:-

1. Staff and partners have the information and tools to articulate the changes correctly to patients and the wider population.
2. After opening, continue educating the public about the services available across all hospital sites and the community and encourage the appropriate use of services, incorporating winter comms messaging.

The population facing campaign is well underway with collateral including:-

- Bus adverts – 150 interiors & 50 rears (from 30 September 2024).
- 54 signs across City and Sandwell hospital sites.
- Paid for social media campaign (from 22 August 2024). This included videos in Punjabi and Urdu which have been geographical targeted.
- Digital radio adverts and interviews on community radio stations (from 16 September 2024).
- Digital street hubs.
- Six infographics.
- Four supermarket screens.

- A toolkit of materials cascaded for partners to use across their network- for example school newsletters. Materials for the toolkit are also being produced in community languages, BSL and easy read formats.
- GP waiting room screens in Sandwell are all displaying a new MMUH animation with details on the changes to Urgent and Emergency Care (UEC).
- A leaflet has been produced and is ready to be distributed to every home in Sandwell catchment from Monday 23 September 2024. This advises on the changes to UEC and where to go for appropriate treatment from Sunday 6 October 2024.
- Text messages have been approved for distribution to registered patients, pre and post ED closures, via GP registrant lists. The first of these will be to around 330,000 Sandwell registered patients (generally over 80% of registered patients have a mobile phone on record).
- Site advertising has gone live in most venues – the larger installs such as the banner on the side of Sandwell Hospital will be installed by Monday 30 September 2024.
- Press releases to support key messages such as travel and transport including the new bus routes that will serve MMUH.
- Letters from chaplains to faith leaders and a press release to encourage the sharing of key messages about the opening.

The digital campaign on social media is performing well:-

- Insights from the social media advertising have shown 1.5 million impressions (as of Friday 20 September 2024) with a reach of approximately 1.3 million.
- The social media through the Trust feed has seen an organic reach of around 400,000, this is largely from engaging, staff led video content with details on the new hospital.
- Our engagement is in a good place too with a Click Through Rate (CTR) at 0.65% (as of Friday 20 September 2024) with anything over 0.60% seen as above average for display performance.

A [new section on the Trust website](#) has been created to host the information required to support the campaign and toolkits are being made available to partners to support them to share key messages too.

On 20 September 2024 a media event was hosted to ensure the opening is visible and present in the press. This resulted in wide spread coverage in print, broadcast and radio (including Raj fm who broadcast in Punjabi).

On 20 September 2024 a stakeholder event was hosted to gain momentum through our leaders celebrating and sharing the news of the opening too. Many local leaders attended, including local GPs, Councillors, the Mayor of Sandwell, health and care executives, community and faith and business leaders.

It is important to note that this campaign is supported by direct patient messaging for those who need to attend appointments etc. We employ over 7,000 staff many of whom are residents and whose family and friends use the services. Internal communications are frequent, targeted and detailed. It is also supported by changes to Road and Hospital site signage which will ensure the public know there is no A&E at Sandwell from the 6 October 2024.

We recognise that not all members of our community can be reached through digital or other communication channels. The communications campaign is supported by community engagement which has included: -

- The Midland Met Bus has engaged with over 5,000 people and visited over 100 different locations, including libraries, children's centres, health centres and Trust sites.
- We have held three events with primary and secondary care, strengthening relationships ahead of the move.
- We have worked with local schools on a community researchers initiative.
- Our Youth Space continues to go from strength to strength with over 200 members.
- MMUH briefing for critical partners continues - West Midlands Police, Criminal Justice Service, HMP Winson Green.
- Regular meetings with our [Near Neighbours](#), who have seen first-hand the build of the new Midland Metropolitan University Hospital, and have been involved in a continuous conversation with the Trust.
- A pre- opening event for the Near Neighbours was hosted at the new hospital on 23 September to thank them for their support to date and to respond to any additional questions which they might have.
- We are focussed on using our strong networks to reach out and into communities with important information to support the service changes.
- We have committed funding for a community noticeboard scheme to ensure we can communicate the key messages at grassroots level and get feedback from communities as the new hospital opens.

- We are working with grassroots organisations across SWB through to establish an MMUH Community Ambassadors Scheme through the provision of a micro grant.

4.5 Closure of Hawes Lane GP Surgery

Following the permanent closure of Hawes Lane GP Surgery, Hawes Lane, Rowley Regis in July 2024, the Black Country Integrated Care Board put a number of arrangements in place to guarantee ongoing access to local GP services for patients who were registered there.

All clinical services were temporarily moved to Portway Family Practice, Newbury Lane, Oldbury before patients were to be automatically transferred to one of the following three practices:-

- Portway Family Practice
- Haden Vale Medical Practice
- The Practice Old Hill

Medical records were to be securely transferred and there were no actions that were required by patients.

This was communicated to all those registered at the surgery in the following ways:

- Information sent to all patients to confirm they can continue to access services
- Letter sent to all patients to advise them of their new practice and how to access care in the coming weeks.
- Messaging include a number they can call if they had any queries about their individual care needs.

4.6 Engagement with the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board

Representatives from the Black Country Integrated Care Board, Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust and the Directorate of Public Health have been invited to this meeting to respond to Members queries and comments. In addition, this offers Scrutiny Board Members an opportunity to contribute their local knowledge of services and town healthcare priorities.

In addition, on 16 September 2024, following the decision to formally open the hospital site on the 6 October 2024, the Chief Executive and the Head of Public and Community Engagement of Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust attended the Sandwell and Birmingham Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

5 Implications

Resources:	Midland Metropolitan University Hospital is working with stakeholders across Sandwell and West Birmingham including Sandwell Council, the Black Country Integrated Care Board, GPs and Voluntary Organisations.
Legal and Governance:	Governance arrangements for the hospital are managed by Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust.
Risk:	Any risk will be required to be mitigated prior to the opening of the hospital.
Equality:	All residents will be able to access the services.
Health and Wellbeing:	The opening of a new hospital supports the health and wellbeing aims for the local population.
Social Value:	Effective medical care contributes to increased social value within our communities.
Climate Change:	No Climate Change implications directly arise as a result of this report.
Corporate Parenting:	No Corporate Parenting implications directly arise as a result of this report.

6 Appendices

Appendix One – Presentation.
Appendix Two – Residents Leaflet.

7. Background Papers

None.