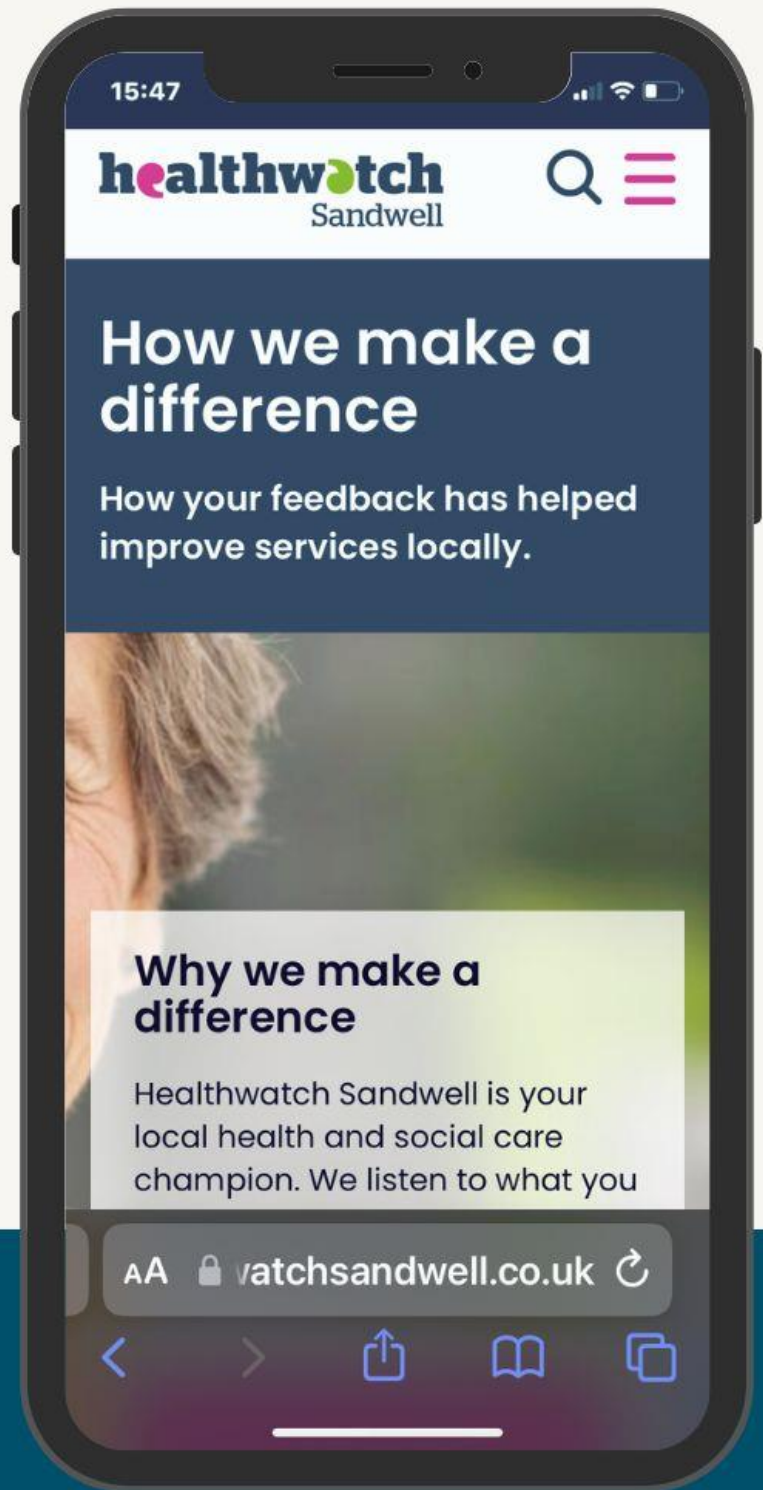


When you tell us a patient experience, it helps us build a picture on what needs improving.

**Share your stories to make a difference!**



**Healthwatch  
Explained**

**healthwatch**  
Sandwell

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# Engaging Communities Solutions

## Introduction

Engaging Communities Solutions CIC (ECS) were successful in regaining the Healthwatch Sandwell (HWS) contract, awarded by Sandwell MBC in October 2024. The contact term is for five years.

ECS is an independent Community Interest Company that specialises in Healthwatch service delivery, Community Engagement and Consultation, Social Research and Independent Advocacy. ECS are one of the largest providers of local Healthwatch services in the country, supporting hundreds of thousands of people every year to have their voices heard.

ECS play a key role in challenging and influencing social policies and practices to make our communities better places and help empower people to have a voice and influence in decisions about health and social care services which affect their lives.

ECS work with a wide range of clients including Local Authorities and the NHS, the Prison Service, Social Housing and Education sectors. The bespoke offer helps clients gather evidence and insight to improve the services they deliver to the public.

**Website: [www.weareecs.co.uk](http://www.weareecs.co.uk)**

# What is Healthwatch all about

Healthwatch was established under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to understand the needs, experiences and concerns of people who use health and social care services and to speak out on their behalf.

## Local Healthwatch

Local Healthwatch are funded by and accountable to local authorities.  
Statutory functions are to:

1. Promote and support the involvement of people, in the monitoring, commissioning and provision of local care services.
2. Enable people to monitor the standard of provision of local care services to determine whether and how local care services could and ought to be improved.
3. Obtain the views of people regarding their need for, and experiences of, local care services and importantly to make these views known to those responsible for commissioning, providing, managing or scrutinising local care services and to Healthwatch England.
4. Make reports and recommendations about how local care services could or ought to be improved. These should be directed to commissioners and providers of care services, and people responsible for managing or scrutinising local care services and shared with Healthwatch England.
5. Provide information and advice to the public about accessing local health and social care services and choice in relation to aspects of those services. Healthwatch will make full use of existing and well-established information systems and networks, rather than create duplication in the system.
6. Formulate views from people on the standard of provision and whether and how the local care services could and ought to be improved and sharing these views with Healthwatch England, to help it carry out its role as national champion.
7. Making recommendations to Healthwatch England to advise the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to conduct special reviews or investigations (or, where the circumstances justify doing so, making recommendations direct to CQC); and to make recommendations to Healthwatch England to publish reports about issues.
8. Providing Healthwatch England with the intelligence and insight it needs to enable it to perform effectively.

**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FDwavhFOHLU>**

# Strategic Objectives

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough (MBC) Corporate Plan (2021-2025) sets out six major outcomes to focus on to make Sandwell a great place to live, work and do business – for residents, businesses and the whole community. The Corporate Plan focuses on six strategic outcomes, the first two of which are:

1. The best start in life for Children and Young People
2. People Live Well and Age Well

## Healthwatch will contribute to Ambitions 1 and 2 of the Vision 2030 of Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council (The Council).

### Ambition 1:

“Sandwell will be a borough where families' aspirations are raised and that prides itself on equality of opportunity and resilience”.

### Ambition 2:

“Sandwell is a place where we live healthy lives and live them for longer, and where those of us who are vulnerable feel respected and cared for”.



## The Role of Healthwatch Sandwell

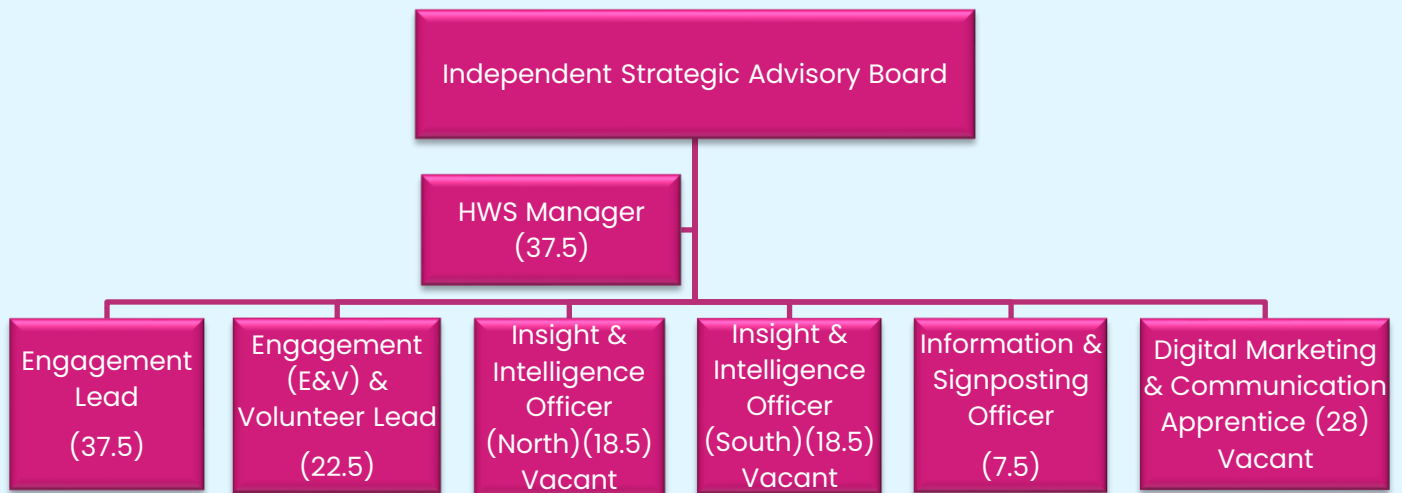
Healthwatch Sandwell (HWS) will cover the six towns in the borough of Sandwell and will engage with all age groups including young people and children who have used health or social care services in Sandwell.

The service will align to existing resources, networks, forums and relationships without duplication. HWS will work in partnership with stakeholders, add value, strengthen local assets, address gaps and take a strategic approach to representing the voice of the people of residents to deliver change and improvements in health and social care service.

Healthwatch Sandwell will:

- Gather intelligence about the experiences of the people of Sandwell in relation to health and social care services.
- Provide a range of opportunities for individuals to share their feedback and experiences and ensure that all voices of people are heard.
- Analyse the experiences, feedback and views of the people, in relation to national drivers.
- Produce robust and evidence-based findings, reports and recommendations which will be made publicly available.
- Develop new key relationships with the local market such as micro providers and maintains existing key stakeholder relationships by engaging with relevant forums across health and social care.
- Be a 'critical friend' and influence change and service improvements by attending local strategic forums and boards representing the voices and experiences of people who use health and social care services.
- Engage with local elected members through the Health and Wellbeing Board, health and social care commissioners and service providers to establish and maintain robust and transparent dialogue.
- Deliver theme-based engagement which has been influenced by the work above, as well as national strategic drivers, and which allow for relevant stakeholders, such as the Health and Wellbeing Board to participate and contribute to the future shaping and improvement of local care services.
- Report back to the people and all relevant stakeholders on the impact that their contribution has had, the actions HWS has taken to influence change and the outcomes that have been delivered as a result.

# How Healthwatch Sandwell aim to do this



## Next Steps

### Health Inequalities

- Build knowledge of local health inequalities and how they are experienced by local people.
- How does this influence the way engagement is undertaken?
- How this analysis of engagement data influences how priorities are selected and different types of impact for people experiencing health inequalities.

### Work Programme and Community Engagement

- Targeted activity in each of the six towns.
- Awareness sessions and drop-ins.
- Social media campaigns.
- Reports published.
- Regular bulletins.
- Virtual Voices Forum.

### Investment

- Recruitment for generic and specific roles.
- Development of an Independent Experts Network.
- Develop a young volunteers programme and Grass Roots Steering Group.

### Collaboration

- Stakeholder Mapping.
- Development of a Citizens Involvement Charter.
- Build on existing relationships with Stakeholders.
- Be proactive in the joining up of Health and Social Care Services.



# How Healthwatch Sandwell will build the Annual Work Programme

Healthwatch Sandwell aims to focus on the big issues that most concern the public and the communities that face the worst inequalities.

We do this in a variety of ways:

- ❖ Reviewing feedback that we have received over the past year from the public.
- ❖ Public consultation, engagement and listening tour and survey.
- ❖ Asking local commissioners and providers about their forthcoming work programmes, to see where our work can add maximum value and to check that we aren't duplicating work that's already being done elsewhere.
- ❖ The national work programme of Healthwatch England.

We also acknowledge and take guidance from

- ❖ The NHS Long Term Plan, to improve the quality of patient care and health outcomes and other programmes such as the Primary Care Access Recovery Plan.
- ❖ Sandwell MBC Vision 2030.

We collate all this together so that our Healthwatch Sandwell Independent Strategic Advisory Board can make relevant decisions about the work we will focus on for the forthcoming year. This is part of the decision-making process laid down by regulations. To support choosing the priorities, we ask ourselves a number of questions such as:

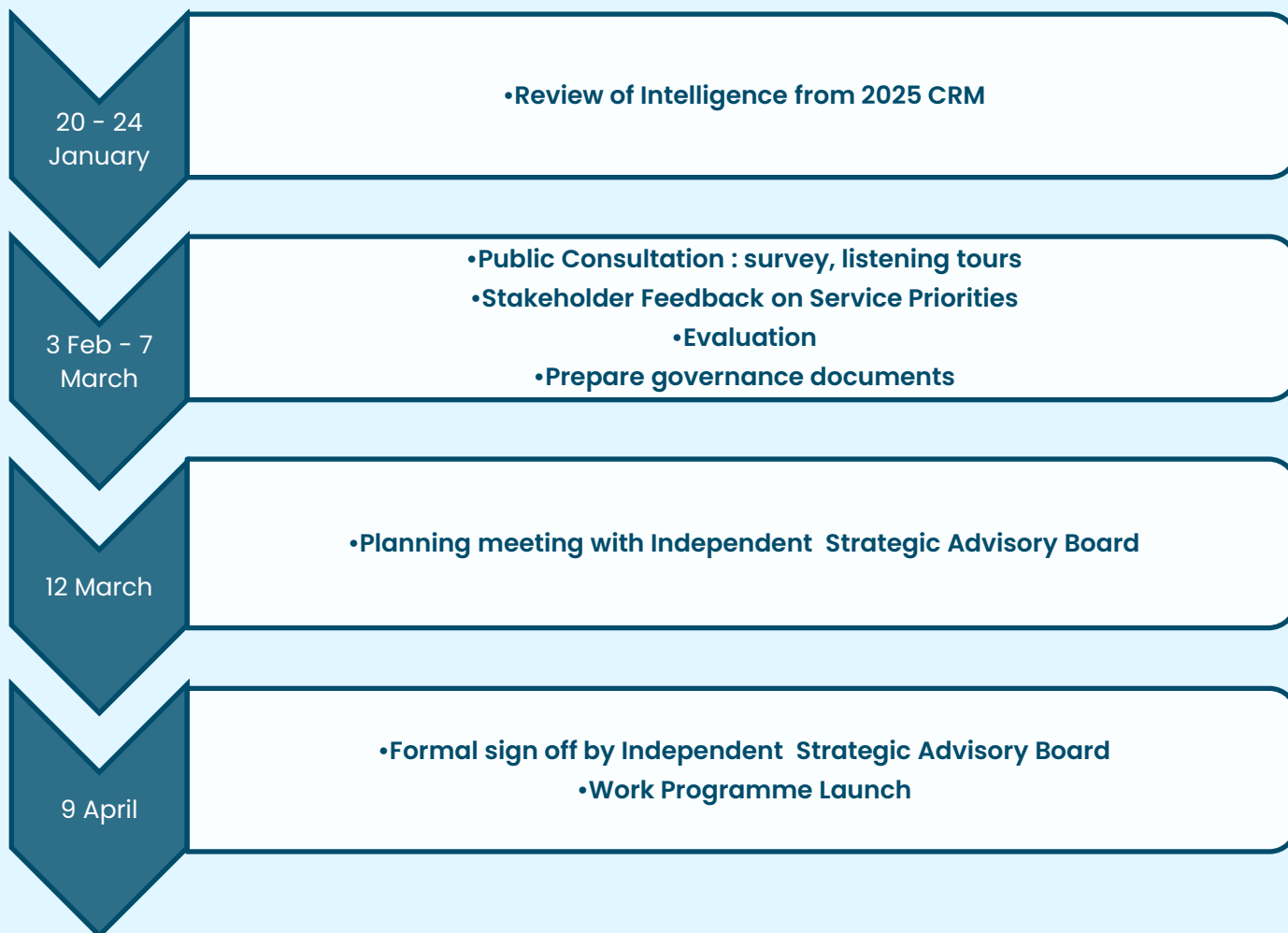
- ❖ How much data/evidence is there about an issue?
- ❖ Does this impact a lot of people?
- ❖ What is the impact on people in community groups who experience health inequalities and who feel their voice is seldom heard?
- ❖ Does the issue help HWS to have a positive influence on health and social care services?
- ❖ Does the issue align with local strategies and need assessments?
- ❖ Is the issue being dealt with effectively by someone else?

Our work priorities are supported with our other work that we are required to deliver such as:

- ❖ Enter and View programme.
- ❖ Volunteering opportunities for the public of Sandwell.
- ❖ Community Engagement and Outreach.
- ❖ Information and signposting to appropriate services and guidance to address issues.
- ❖ Strategic Influencing.
- ❖ Collaboration.



# Timeline for 2025 –2026 Annual Work Programme





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