

Enter and View Report

*Phlebotomy Clinic
Victoria Health Centre
5 Suffrage Street
Smethwick B66 3PZ
Announced Visit
8th August 2023*

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What is Enter and View

Part of Healthwatch Sandwell remit is to carry out Enter and View visits. Healthwatch Sandwell Authorised Representatives will carry out these visits to health and social care premises to find out how they are being run and make recommendations where there are areas for improvement.

The Health and Social Care Act (2012) allows Authorised Representatives to observe service delivery and talk to service users, their families and carers on premises such as hospitals, residential homes, GP practices, dental surgeries, optometrist and pharmacies. Enter and View visits can happen if people tell us there is a problem with a service but, equally, they can occur when services have a good reputation so that we can learn about and share examples of what they do well from the perspective of people who experience the service first hand.

Healthwatch Sandwell Enter and View visits are not intended to specifically identify safeguarding issues. However, if safeguarding concerns arise during a visit, they are reported in accordance with Healthwatch Sandwell Safeguarding Policy, the service manager will be informed and the visit will end. The local authority Safeguarding Team will also be informed.

Provider details



Phlebotomy Clinic - Victoria Health Centre

Name: Phlebotomy Clinic
Address of Service : Victoria Health Centre
5 Suffrage Street
Smethwick
B66 3PZ

Chief Executive: Richard Beeken

Service type: Phlebotomy

Phlebotomy is the process of taking blood samples from Patients, to aid doctors in their investigations and diagnosis. At Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust, all blood tests are by appointment only and can be carried out at a number of locations including Victoria Health Centre.

There is an online booking system for blood tests using the Airmid UK app.

To book using the app, Patients must meet the following criteria:

- Had a blood test previously.
- Aged 16 and over.
- Have been referred for a blood test by their GP.

Patients are able to book, cancel and reschedule their blood test appointment via Airmid UK.

Patients who are new still need to telephone the blood test team on 0121 507 6104 (between 8 am - 4.30 pm Monday to Friday) or email at swbh.phlebotomy@nhs.net

Website: <https://www.swbh.nhs.uk/>

 0121 507 6104 (Central Number)

Acknowledgments

Healthwatch Sandwell would like to thank the staff team and the visitors to the clinic for their co-operation during the visit.

Disclaimer

Please note that this report is related to findings and observations made during our visit made on 8th August 2023. The report does not claim to represent the views of all visitors, only of those who contributed within the restricted time available.

Authorised Representatives

Anita Andrews, Melissa Elders and Sophie Shuttlewood conducted the visit.

Purpose of the report

This report will provide an overview of the services at the Phlebotomy Service and will provide Patient experience feedback. Where appropriate, recommendations

will be made based on the findings of this Enter and View visit and it is anticipated that these recommendations will contribute to improving service delivery within the clinic and in turn improve the service experience for Patients.

Who we share the report with

This report and its findings will be shared with Healthwatch Sandwell Advisory Board, Sandwell MBC, Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust, the Integrated Care System and Healthwatch England. The report will also be published on the Healthwatch Sandwell website: (www.healthwatchesandwell.co.uk)

Healthwatch Sandwell details

Address: Walker Grange, Central Avenue, Tipton. DY4 9RZ
Website: <https://www.healthwatchesandwell.co.uk/>
Phone: 0121 569 7211
Social media: <https://www.facebook.com/HWatchSandwell>
Instagram: www.instagram.com/healthwatchesandwell
Twitter: @HWSandwell

Healthwatch principles

Healthwatch Sandwell's Enter and View programme is linked to the eight principles of Healthwatch, and questions are asked around each one.

1. **A healthy environment:** Right to live in an environment that promotes positive health and wellbeing
2. **Essential Services:** Right to a set of preventative, treatment and care services provided to a high standard to prevent Patients reaching crisis
3. **Access:** Right to access services on an equal basis with others without fear of discrimination or harassment, when I need them in a way that works for me and my family
4. **A safe, dignified and quality services:** Right to high quality, safe, confidential services that treat me with dignity, compassion and respect
5. **Information and education:** Right to clear and accurate information that I can use to make decisions about health and care treatment. I want the right to education about how to take care of myself and about what I am entitled to in the health and social care system
6. **Choice:** Right to choose from a range of high quality services, products and providers within health and social care

7. **Being listened to:** Right to have my concerns and views listened to and acted upon. I want the right to be supported in taking action if I am not satisfied with the service I have received
8. **Being involved:** To be treated as an equal partner in determining my own health and wellbeing. I want the right to be involved in decisions that affect my life and those affecting services in my local community.

Purpose of the visit

The purpose of the visit was to observe the environment and explore first-hand with Patients their experiences of using the Diabetes Clinic. This was achieved by observation and talking to Patients and staff.

What we did

Our Authorised Representatives facilitated the visit and spoke to **12** Patients, both male and female of mixed ethnicities and observed the environment on 8th August 2023.

A pre-set of questions were asked that covered:

- Patient experience of the service including booking appointments, care by staff, accessibility to the building and information and any suggestions to improve the service.
- How staff meet individual needs of Patients including the communication needs of Patients who have impairments, handling anti-social behaviour from Patients / relatives, how to support Patients who want to raise a complaint / concern about the service and suggestions to improve the service.

Observations were made of the environment both externally and internally, that included:

- Signposting, accessibility, lighting, refreshments, cleanliness, parking and transport links.

Findings:

A healthy Environment

External

The Phlebotomy Clinic is situated in Victoria Health Centre, which is located in Smethwick adjacent to a residential area.

There is step free access at the entrance. The venue does have its own car park with disabled parking and a drop off point. There is access to the practice by

public transport from surrounding areas. There is no signage to the phlebotomy clinic externally.

The Health Centre accommodates a number of services including:

- Victoria Dental Clinic
- Norvic Family Practice (General Practice)
- Health visitors
- Foot Clinic
- Phlebotomy

Internal

The waiting area is in the middle of the Health Centre, with seating and notice boards for each service surrounding the Health Centre. Prior to our visit a poster was sent to the clinic to advertise the visit, this was displayed on the notice board in the waiting area during the visit.

There is a reception at the main entrance of Victoria Health Clinic, but this is not staffed. The Phlebotomy Clinic does **not** have its own reception, Patients are required to book in on arrival at a screen.



There were WCs off the waiting area, on the day of the visit they were locked, however there was no sign indicating where the key was available to access to WC.

On the day of the visit, the clinic was clean and the décor well maintained. Covid 19 precautions are in place i.e. sanitising hand gel dispensers at the entrance.

We were informed that there was no loop system. There were no obvious hazards or health and safety risks. There were no facilities within the clinic to purchase refreshments.

The opening times are not displayed.

Victoria Health Clinic accommodates various services as identified above. However, there isn't one organisation that co-ordinates the services within the venue, they appear to operate as separate services. This means that there isn't anyone responsible for the whole building.

Essential services

12 Patients were spoken to in the waiting area. 33% of the Patients had type 2 diabetes and 100% had waited up to 4 weeks for their appointment.

Patients described their first impression of the clinic as good. They described the venue as *'a lot clearer than it used to be...it used to cluttered, the staff have removed extra chairs and display stands'* Patients valued having open space.

91% Patients found the booking system very easy and a small minority had used the Airmid app.

66% knew who to contact while they were waiting for this appointment.

One person struggled with booking via telephone as they were waiting on hold for a while but were at work and this wasn't practical.

Access

Accessibility of the building.

All the Patients had no problems finding the clinic and some had received clear directions beforehand.

Safe, dignified and quality services

The Patients gave extremely positive feedback about the service. Patients described staff as very understanding and showed empathy. 100% were happy with the service and rated it as *'excellent'* and were *'very likely'* to recommend this service to friends and family.

Information and education

The waiting area has a comfortable seating area which included notice boards with relevant information.

100% stated that all the information received prior to the appointment was described as *'Plain and simple...just what I needed to know'*

All of the Patients that were spoken to, were communicated with by text.

Choice

All Patients stated that were given a choice of which clinic to attend 25% chose this clinic as it was close to their home.

16% preferred the same gender as themselves due to their culture.

Being listened to

Patients described being listened to around their health carer needs and all their questions were answered.



*'I have been treated well ... staff are good at communication ...
very nice polite people'*

Comments and complaints.

41% were unaware of how to raise complaints, concerns or compliments. Some stated that they didn't know as they had never had a cause to raise any concerns.

Staff described how they support Patients who want to raise a complaint/concern about the service, by talking the issue through and then if it can't be resolved signposting to their Manager.

A Patient described a barrier to this service was having to waiting to get through on the telephone to make an appointment.

Being involved

Staff promote Patient involvement, this is achieved by open communication with the Patient during the appointment.

Staffing and feedback

There is a peripatetic team of Phlebotomists who work at the various clinics around the Borough.

Staff enjoy their role especially meeting new people and working in a good team. The new booking system has improved the effectiveness of the service. The majority of the time Patients do not arrive randomly now.

However, they face many challenges which include:

- The system to book appointments is relatively new and there has caused confusion for Patients but this is also challenging when the local GP practice do not follow the procedure e.g. completing referral forms. This can mean that the Patient has to go back to the GP. Staff described GPs instructing Patients to turn up at the clinic, it appears that they are unfamiliar with the booking system
- The clinic is very busy for 2 members of staff. Their working day is very busy and managing time can be an issue
- Due to the location of the Phlebotomy clinic (front of building) Patients regularly go the clinic for other services which interrupts the service
- Lack of risk assessment from Managers of Care Homes for people with a learning disability. An example was given whereby a service user attempted to bite a member of staff
- The unstaffed reception causes confusion for Patients

Staff occasionally experience anti-social behaviour from Patients. This is mainly due to frustration of waiting, this has led to rudeness and verbal aggression. There have been incidents of racial abuse to staff too. Staff are skilled in defusing these types of situations by communicating effectively and calmly. Staff are also skilled at building rapport and this in turn builds trust and this improves the relationship.

Staff described how they meet the communication needs of Patients such as those who are: visually, hearing impaired, learning needs and language needs of people, this is achieved in various ways:

- verbally explaining what is happening to visually impaired Patients
- showing the appointment letter to hearing impaired Patients
- encourage family members, where English is a second language, to accompany the Patient. An example was given whereby a conversation took place via telephone. Some staff are bilingual which is an asset. Language interpreters are not usually involved as the appointment is rapid and the staff manage the situation
- carers/ relatives are encouraged to accompany the Patient

We were informed that all staff receive ongoing staff development, which includes personal development reviews, annual appraisals where training needs are identified and relevant training provided to meet staff's needs. There are team meetings where issues can be raised and the Manager has an open door policy.

Staff made suggestions to improve the service:

- provide security staff in the building
- open the reception area with staff
- provide a contact point for who has responsibility for the building
- provide a sign re: locked WCs

Recommendations

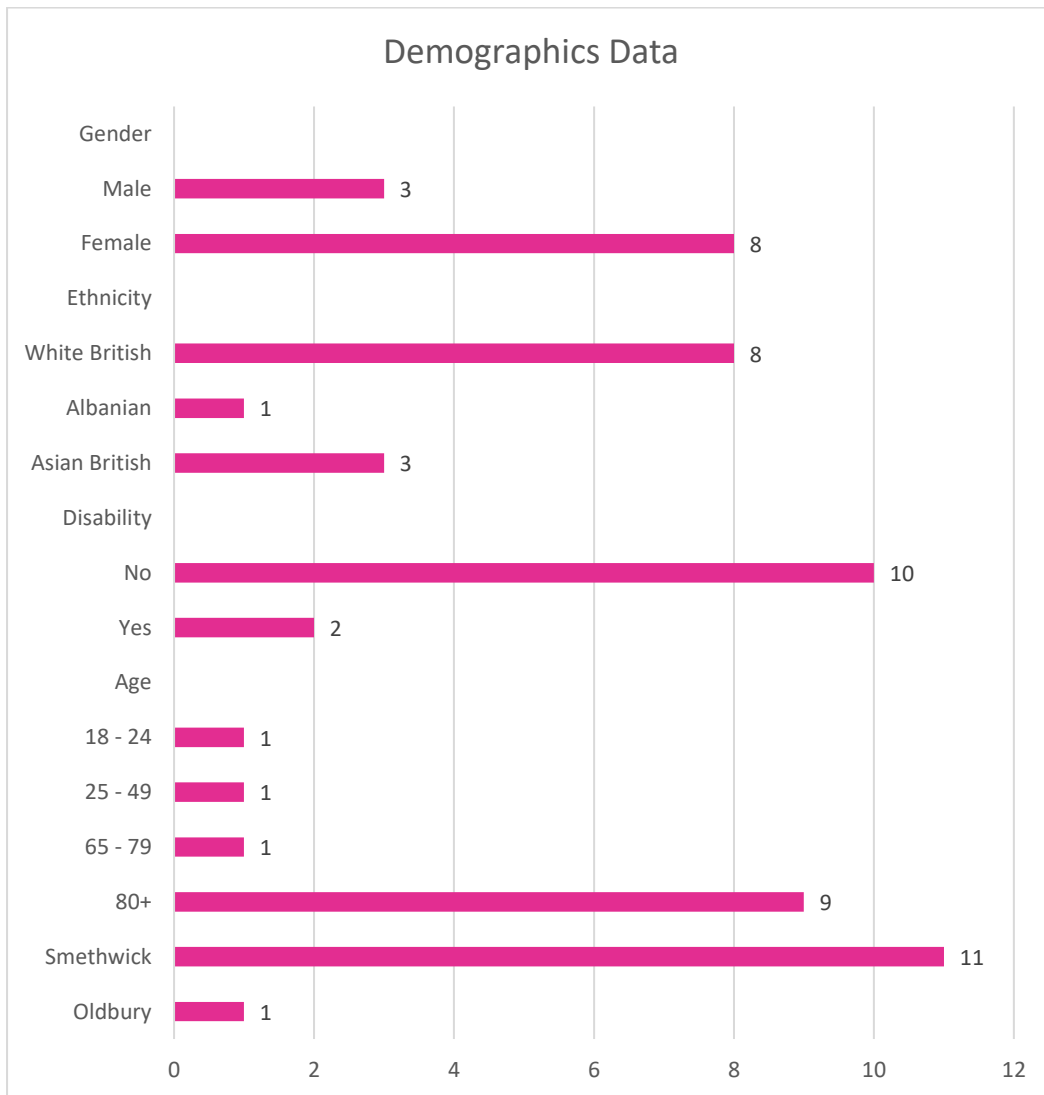
The Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust to consider:

1. provide a loop system for hearing impaired Patients and advertise this facility
2. be proactive in informing Patients of the comments and complaints process
3. promote the new booking system (Airmid App) with the Public and local GPs as well as the criteria to book a blood test by telephone
4. providing a sign to explain why the WC is locked and how to gain access
5. liaise with Property Management of the building to discuss security, signage and staffing the reception area within the building
6. liaise with local care home providers regarding a risk assessment of vulnerable Patients with challenging behaviour and develop protocols to share this information with staff at the clinic

Provider feedback

No feedback was received from the Provider.

Who we spoke to





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