



# Enter and View Report

*The Eye Clinic - Sandwell General  
Hospital*

*Announced Visit*

*13<sup>th</sup> June 2023*



**Engaging  
Communities  
Solutions**

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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



<u>Name:</u>	The Eye Clinic
<u>Address of Service :</u>	Sandwell General Hospital, Lyndon, West Bromwich, West Midlands, B71 4HJ
<u>Chief Executive:</u>	Richard Beeken
<u>Name of Outpatient Department Manager:</u>	Sherminder Sanghera (Cindy)

### Service type:

Ophthalmology is a large area of medicine with ophthalmologists specialising in different conditions of the eye.

Usually, the patient's GP will have referred to the most appropriate consultant's clinic.

Patients may be seen by a range of professionals in the team which may include ophthalmologists (eye surgeons), specialist nurse, ophthalmic practitioners or optometrist. They examine the internal and external structure of eyes to detect conditions such as glaucoma, macular degeneration and cataracts.

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

 0121 507 6712 or 0121 507 3277 or Main switchboard 0121 553 1831

## Acknowledgments

Healthwatch Sandwell would like to thank Sherminder Sanghera (Cindy), her 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 13<sup>th</sup> June 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, Ann Marie Hunt, Stephanie Thomas and Melissa Elders conducted the visit.

## Purpose of the report:

This report will provide an overview of the services at the Eye Clinic 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.healthwatchsandwell.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchsandwell.co.uk))

## Healthwatch Sandwell details

Address: Walker Grange, Central Avenue, Tipton. DY4 9RZ  
Website: <https://www.healthwatchsandwell.co.uk/>  
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Instagram: [www.instagram.com/healthwatchsandwell](http://www.instagram.com/healthwatchsandwell)  
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 Eye Clinic. This was achieved by observation and talking to patients and staff.

## What we did

Our Authorised Representatives facilitated the visit and spoke to 6 patients; male, female, mixed ethnicities and observed the environment on 13<sup>th</sup> June 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 entrance to the Eye Clinic was signposted from entering the main reception to the Outpatients which is accessed via Little Lane.



The outpatients are situated outside the centre of the West Bromwich town. There is a bus stop within 150 m (164 yards) of the venue, the nearest mainline station is Sandwell & Dudley.

The venue has its own parking with spaces for Blue Badge holders. The route from the car park to the entrance is accessible to a wheelchair user with assistance and there is a designated drop off point.

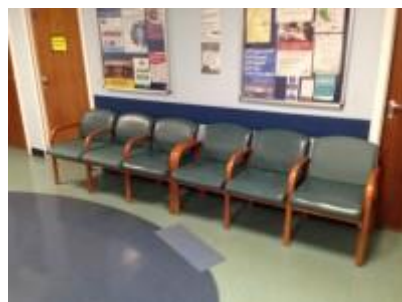


Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust is completely non-smoking throughout. Although it supports vaping in the grounds, but not in our buildings or entrances. Vaping is allowed outside, and a small number of smoking shelters will be converted into vaping shelters. These shelters are monitored by CCTV to ensure they are not used for smoking.



### Internal

The waiting area had a comfortable seating area. There were notice boards and a good supply of relevant information in leaflet holders.



Prior to our visit a poster was sent to the clinic to advertise the visit, this was displayed in the waiting area during the visit.

On the day of the visit, the clinic was welcoming, clean and the décor well maintained. There was infection control information in place (noticeboard). There were no obvious hazards or health and safety risks as it is neatly set out and not overcrowded.

Patients are called by name to their consultation. There are 6 consultation/treatment rooms available.

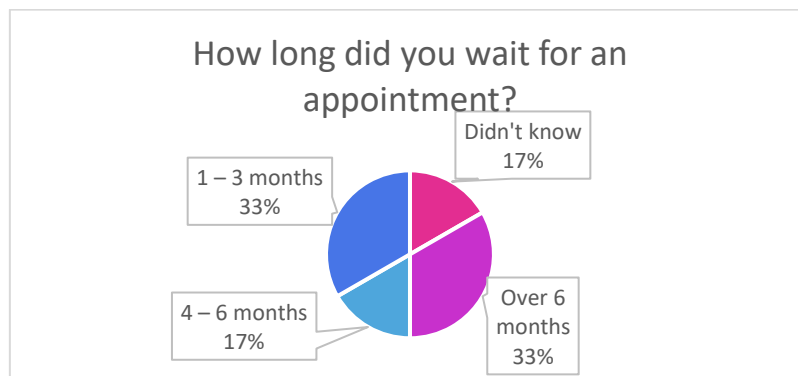
We were informed that there was a loop system for hearing impaired people but it is not used often. There were no facilities within the clinic to purchase refreshments, but there are places to purchase refreshments in the main outpatients area via the entrance, although these close at 3 pm approx.

There was no colour TV in the waiting area. The opening times are not displayed externally.

There are adapted and standard toilet facilities available within the outpatients waiting area.

## Essential services

Six patients were spoken to in the waiting area. **5** Patients were attending for a follow up appointment and **1** for an initial consultation.

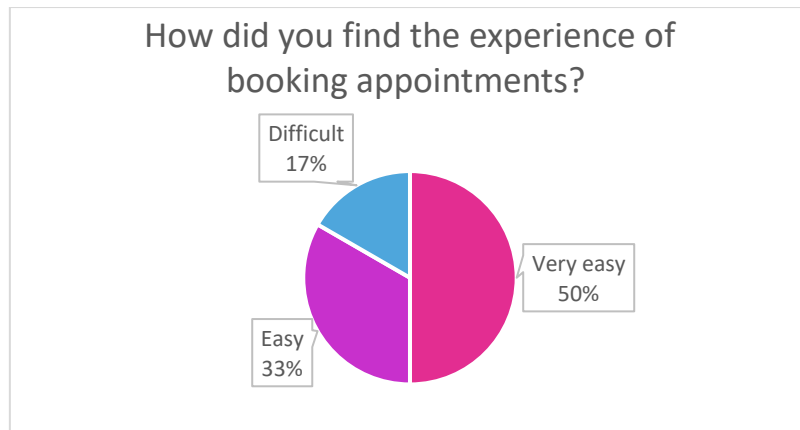


While patients were waiting for their appointment **100%** knew who to contact if they had a query.

The patients gave extremely positive feedback about the service. **100%** were happy with the service and rated it as **excellent**, and **50%** were 'very likely' and **33%** to 'likely' recommend this service to friends and family. **17%** did not answer this question

**50%** Patients found the booking system very easy.





83% said that all their questions were answered and 17% somewhat.

Patients described their first impression of the clinic as good and in good condition. However one patient thought it was dated and need homely pictures.

One patient commented :

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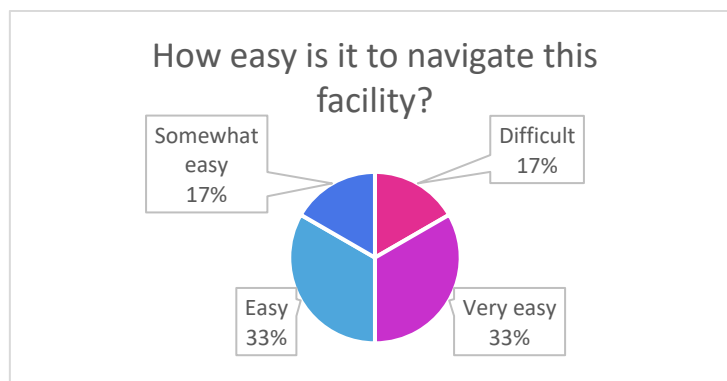
*'it's great, they should send me here all the time instead of City Hospital'*

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## Access

Accessibility of the building.

The majority of the patients had no problems finding the clinic, however the letter they had received was confusing as it said they had to go to Ophthalmic Clinic which some patients found confusing and would prefer to see the title as the Eye clinic to correlate with the signage outside the clinic.



## Safe, dignified and quality services

Patients described staff as 'friendly' and 'very good'. They were described as 'very understanding' by all patients and that they showed empathy.

100% felt they have been listened to around their health needs.

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*'Fantastic, I can talk to them easily'*

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### Information and education

The waiting area has a comfortable seating area which includes, notice boards with relevant information and leaflet holders. The majority of the signs were black font against a yellow background, which is effective for people with visual impairments.

The clinic had a good supply of information about various eye conditions and support services.

100% of the respondents stated that all the information received about their appointment was clear and concise and easy to understand and explained the purpose of the appointment. Although as previously mentioned, patients would prefer it to be referred to as the Eye Clinic and not the Ophthalmic Clinic.

100% of the patients were communicated with by letter and preferred this form of communication although they some would like email or text too.

### Choice

83% of patients were allocated an appointment at this clinic and 17% were given a choice of which clinic to attend in the Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust.

Patients did not require the same gender staff as themselves.

### Being listened to

100% felt they have been listened to around their health issues and their concerns.

### Comments and complaints.

66% were unaware of how to raise any issues. 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 calmly talking the issue through to 'nip it in the bud' and then if it can't be resolved signposting to Manager who will give them the necessary form to complete.

100% had not encountered any barriers at this service, one person suggested a drop in service would be good.

## Being involved

Staff explained that patients are encouraged to ask as many questions as possible about their care.

## Staffing and feedback

There is an established team at this service which includes:

Consultant Ophthalmologists and Vitreoretinal Surgeon, Consultant Eye Surgeon, a variety of Nurses - Bands (2 - 6 inclusive).

There is an Eye Clinic Liaison Officer (employed by Adult Social Care - Sandwell MBC). This person is part of the prevention team and supports and sign posts potential patient pathways into the clinic (sight and hearing impaired).

We spoke to 3 members of staff who were very committed to their role and patients care.

We were informed that all staff receive on going staff development, which includes supervision and annual appraisals, where training needs are identified and relevant training provided to meet staff's needs. We were also informed that there are career progression opportunities within this service.

The staff described their manager as effective and a good listener.

We were informed that staff rarely face anti-social behaviour, but if they do its due to waiting times to see the consultant or if the appointment gets cancelled and patients can't get answers from main reception.

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:

- The secretaries will book interpreters (BSL and Language interpreters). On a day to day basis they will pull their mask down to help lip readers, keeping social distancing in place. There is a Loop system but it isn't used very much.
- For patients with language challenges they use the Sheridan Gardner test<sup>1</sup>
- They also involve interpreters, which the Trust will book or family/friends are encouraged to join the patient.

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<sup>1</sup> A test for detecting visual disability in children who are too young to be able to read the Snellen chart. A series of cards, each marked with a single letter of a specific size, are held up at a distance of 6 metres from the child being tested. The patient is provided with an identification card containing a selection of letters and is asked to point to the letter that is the same as the one on the card in the distance.

- For patients with a learning disability, again family/carers are encouraged to accompany the patient they also use picture books and use simple language. Where there are sensory issues the lights are turned down.

Patients share their communication needs with staff which is noted. We were informed that the clinic's Information Technology system does not flag these needs on patient records.

The Eye Care Liaison Officer supports people and provides relevant information and signposts to support services in Adult Social care.

Staff described that they enjoy working in an effective multi-disciplinary team. They have a passion for ophthalmology and enjoy the variety of each day. They enjoy helping to support people with sight issues via support/equipment to remain independent. They described wanting to make a difference to patients' lives and regularly go the 'extra mile'

To improve the service that is offered, staff suggested:

- Patients letters need to be in large print and on yellow paper to improve access and independence. There is a need for standard patient letters, currently one of the letters asks for a urine sample which isn't necessary. This can cause stress for patients at times.
- Leaflets in other languages are available in the Trust but the clinic need a supply for those patients who can read.
- Patient transport - on occasion the patient transport can be very late, and there has been times when the Eye Clinic has closed and the patient is still waiting to go be taken home. Also as previously mentioned refreshments in the main waiting area close mid-afternoon which can leave patients without access to drinks - this poses a risk to patients with diabetes.
- Appropriate equipment to avoid patients having to go to Birmingham Midland Eye Centre (BMEC) including:
  - A Fundus<sup>2</sup> camera
  - Offer patients fluorescein angiography<sup>3</sup> at Sandwell General Hospital, currently only offered at BMEC.
  - To utilise eye clinic more, this was requested by some patients too as its close to their homes.

## Recommendations

The Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust to consider:

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<sup>2</sup> The fundus camera is an instrument used for fundus photography, which captures the images of the retina, optic nerve head, macula, retinal blood vessels, choroid, and the vitreous.

<sup>3</sup> A fluorescein angiogram uses a special dye and camera to look at the blood vessels in the back of the eye.

1. Accessibility:
  - a. A standard letter on yellow paper and large print with name of Eye clinic and name of consultant
  - b. Leaflets in community languages to be available on request
  - c. All signage in clinic to have a yellow background and black text
  - d. Advertise the availability of a loop system for hearing impaired people
  - e. The clinic's Information Technology system to flag patient's communication needs on patient records
2. Be proactive with informing patients of the complaints/comments process
3. Liaise with passenger transport (West Midlands Ambulance Service) re: collection
4. Include homely effects in the clinic e.g. framed pictures of scenes etc.
5. Appropriate equipment to avoid patients having to go to Birmingham Midland Eye Centre

## Provider feedback

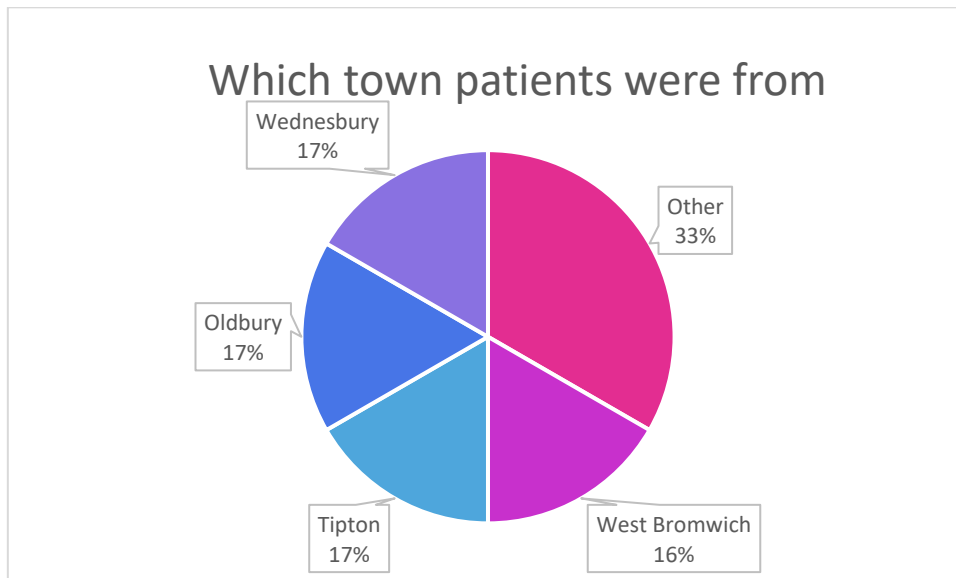
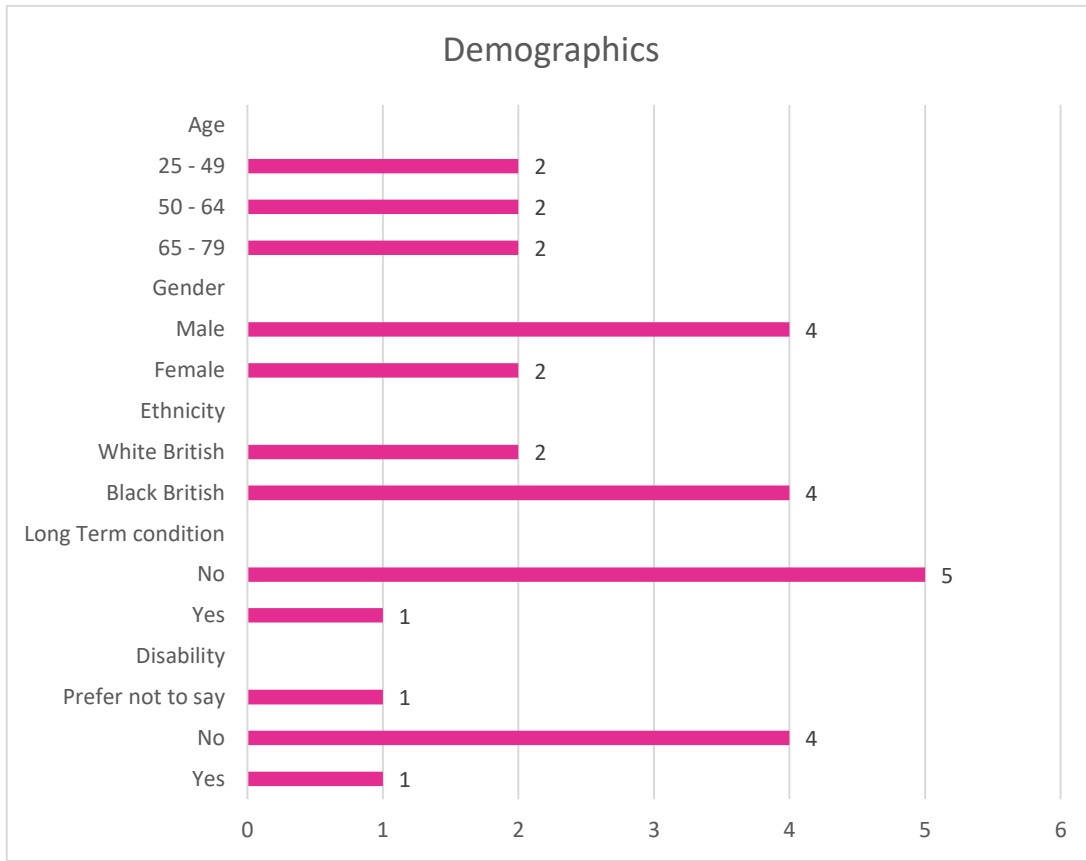
The Directorate Lead Nurse - Ophthalmology gave the following feedback:

1. In relation to emails and texts for appointment letters - the Trust is moving over to a text based system where patients are sent a text to which they need to log into to view their appointment letter. If the text is not accessed a physical letter is sent....some patients like this method and some find it more stressful.
2. With regards to the career progression within Outpatient Department (OPD) for our care assistants, to clarify we are really proud of the pathways available to our staff. Care assistants are employed on a Band 2 initially - when they have achieved specific competencies they are automatically moved onto the next band up (Band 3) to recognise the additional roles they are undertaking. We have supported 4 Trainee Nurse Associates through OPD (1 has qualified as a Nurse Associate and 3 continuing to work through the programme). On qualifying, they will then be registered with the Nursing and Midwifery Council and have a pin number.

The Directorate Lead Nurse - Ophthalmology also queried a sentence, which was amended in the report.

Healthwatch Sandwell welcome receiving feedback from Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust.

## Who we spoke to:





Address: Walker Grange, Central Avenue, Tipton. DY4 9RZ  
Website: <https://www.healthwatchesandwell.co.uk/>  
Telephone: 0121 569 7211  
E mail: [info@healthwatchesandwell.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchesandwell.co.uk)  
Social media:  
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/HWatchSandwell>  
Instagram: [www.instagram.com/healthwatchesandwell](http://www.instagram.com/healthwatchesandwell)  
Twitter: @HWSandwell