

Listening to people in local libraries

September 2024



Libraries are essential community hubs

They offer a range of services that bring different people together.

Healthwatch Dudley listens to people's views of health and social care. We aim to hear from all communities including those who may find it more difficult to have their voices heard. We share feedback with people who have the power to improve services.

Libraries are essential community hubs. They offer a range of services that bring people together. People drop in to borrow a book or DVD, to use a computer or to attend an activity.

Some of the popular activities include:.

- Rattle & Rhyme: Fun sessions for babies and young children.
- Book Clubs: Places to discuss and enjoy reading.
- Art & Craft Workshops: Creative sessions for all ages.

Better libraries

Better Libraries are a group of libraries that offer a variety of services and facilities.

In Dudley borough, the 13 BETTER Libraries and one Library Link are crucial in connecting residents.

To learn more about local libraries, visit:

www.better.org.uk/library/dudley

The logo for 'BETTER the feel good place' features the word 'BETTER' in large, bold, green capital letters. Above the 'E' in 'BETTER' is a small green circle. Below 'BETTER' is the phrase 'the feel good place' in a smaller, green, lowercase sans-serif font.

What we did

From June to September, our Listening & Signposting Officers conducted drop-in sessions at five libraries:

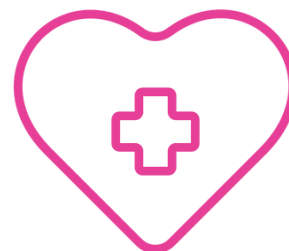
- Brierley Hill
- Halesowen
- Coseley
- Dudley
- Netherton

We spoke with 41 people aged between 8 and 89 years.

What we heard

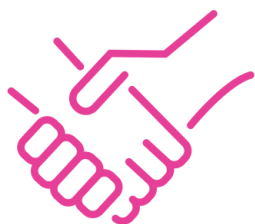
Positive feedback on A&E services

One individual shared a highly positive experience with Accident & Emergency services at Russell's Hall Hospital. The patient was seen quickly following a fall, they received tests and x-rays with a quick discharge process.



"It was excellent, I was discharged within three and a half hours."

Access and trust in the NHS



Concerns were expressed by a member of the Polish community about their lack of trust in local healthcare services. This mistrust has led some to seek treatment abroad or rely heavily on Accident & Emergency departments rather than registering with a GP.

"I know people in the Polish community are not registering with a GP as they don't trust the service."

Delays in referrals and diagnoses

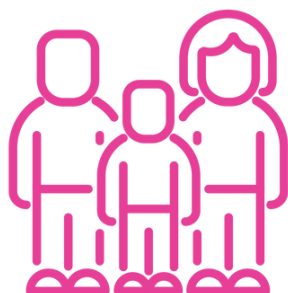
Several people reported frustration with long waiting times for referrals and being diagnosed, which is causing significant anxiety and affecting their overall health and wellbeing.



"I had to pay privately to get a diagnosis."

Complaints in GP services

We heard from a patient who had made multiple complaints about GDPR issues, unaddressed referrals, and staff attitudes at their GP practice. Unfortunately they were dissatisfied with the responses received.



Positive feedback

We heard positive feedback about a local dental practice and some GP services, they appreciated the appointment reminders they receive.

"I get text reminders for overdue check ups, I find them really useful."



Games club

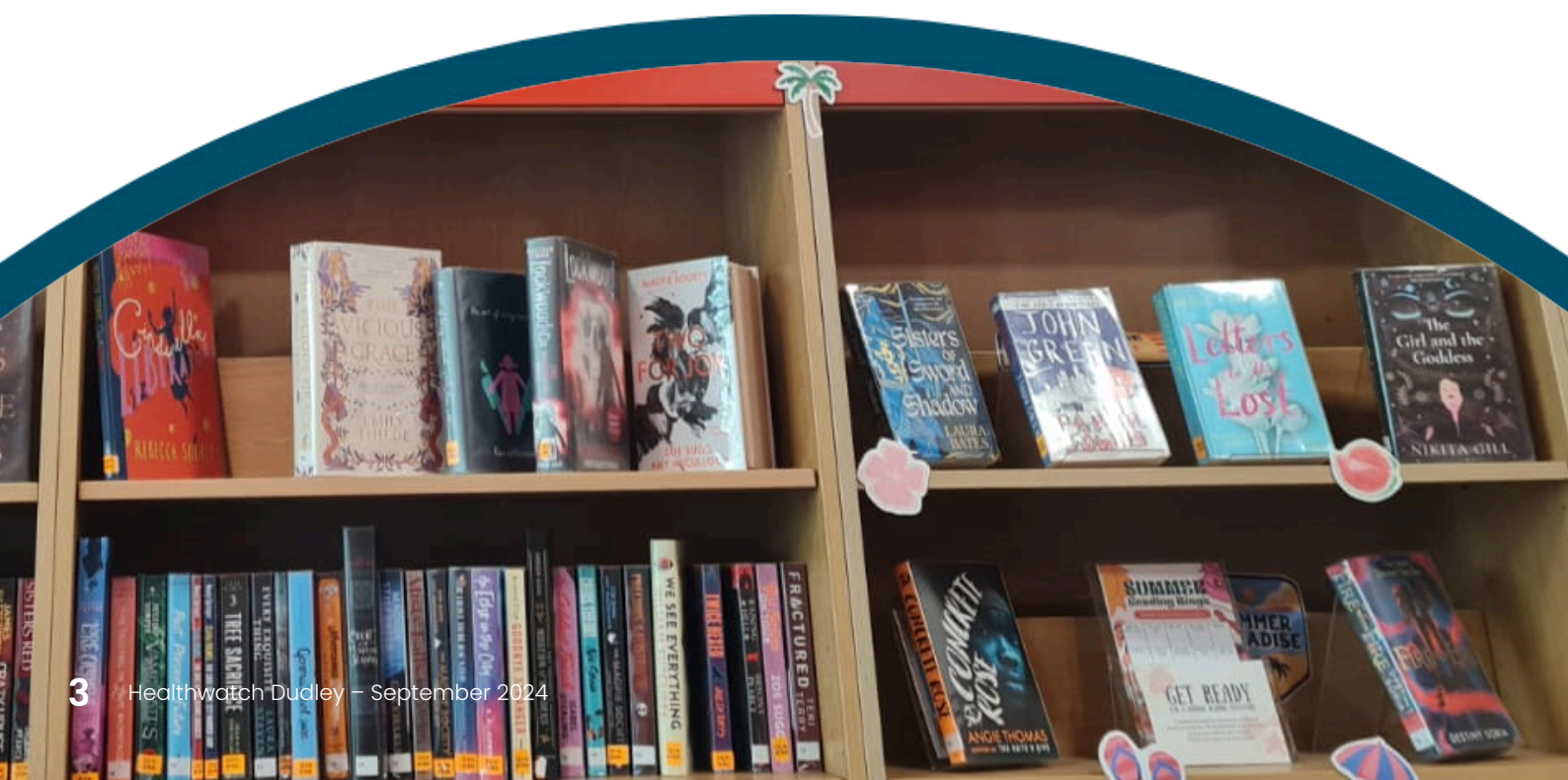
- ## Friends of the library

- ## Student nurses

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During our drop-in sessions, we helped people in several ways:

- We connected individuals with their GP practices and Adult Social Care for needed referrals and home adaptations.
- We handed out pens, postcards and information leaflets to spread the word about Healthwatch Dudley.



Next steps

Our engagement has highlighted some key areas for action:

- **Celebrate Good Experiences:** We'll share positive A&E feedback with the hospital to reinforce their good practices.
- **Support local Libraries:** Libraries are crucial for community engagement and information, and we'll continue to promote their role.
- **Access to services:** Access to services continues to be the top issue we hear from the community. We are working with primary care leaders to improve access to GP services. We will continue to highlight the need to improve access across NHS services to ensure people get the care they need.

Thank you

Libraries play an important role in our community by providing spaces where people can connect and access information.

Thank you to the people who have shared their thoughts and experiences. Sharing these stories helps to inform improvements in health and social care across Dudley borough.



If you would like this report in another language or format please contact us.

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**Committed
to quality**

Healthwatch Dudley is committed to providing a quality service, from how we collect data, to the information we provide. Every three years we perform an in-depth audit, in conjunction with Healthwatch England, to ensure we meet this high standard.