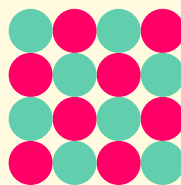
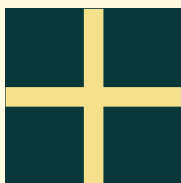


A GUIDE TO LIVING WELL THIS WINTER





Get to the help you need

111.nhs.uk

Get assessed and directed
to the right place for you
without leaving your sofa.

Use 111
online

Help us
help you

INTRODUCTION – WELCOME MESSAGE FROM SANDWELL COUNCIL

Leader Councillor Kerrie Carmichael



We know the cost of living crisis continues to affect people across Sandwell.

The aim of this booklet is to reach everyone we possibly can with advice on staying healthy and safe this winter – as well as sharing NHS health advice and information on how to find support if you need it.

We now have Welcoming Spaces – last winter known as Warm Spaces – ready to offer a friendly face, a warm drink and support and advice at libraries, council buildings and community venues.

The change of name reflects that these spaces will welcome people who need support, advice, safety or company in any weather. Our commitment to operating our Welcoming Spaces will continue year-round. Find out where to find a Welcoming Space on page 11.

Back in October, the council held a Cost of Living Summit which involved more than 70 of our partner organisations and was the launch of our Tackling Poverty Plan.

The plan highlights some of the great work already happening, such as our Welfare Rights team and the wider Sandwell Advice Providers Network which has supported 39,000 people to access £31million in benefits and advised on £20million of problem debt.

Supporting Sandwell through the cost of living emergency continues to be an absolute priority for the council, and we're working hard with our partners to do everything we can to help residents through these continuing difficult times.

I hope you find this booklet useful, and please share the information in it with anyone who may need some extra help and support this winter.

Councillor Kerrie Carmichael

Councillor Kerrie Carmichael
Leader of Sandwell Council



SHARE YOUR FEEDBACK

We welcome your feedback on this booklet to help improve future editions. If you have any feedback, please email us at marketing_publicity@sandwell.gov.uk or write to us at Communications Unit, Sandwell Council House, Oldbury, B69 3DE.



HEALTHY SANDWELL

We find the support you need

Contact us today to find out what local support and activities are available in your local area.

Call **FREE** on
0800 011 4656 or 0121 569 5100

Text GETHEALTHY to 87007

Email: LS@nhs.net

Find us at:
www.healthysandwell.co.uk



Make your life **HEALTHIER & HAPPIER**

Sandwell Public Health Team is part of Sandwell Council



What is a Family Hub?

Children's Centres have grown to include more support and services and are now known as Sandwell Family Hubs.

Our mission is to help all families in Sandwell thrive.

Family Hubs will offer the right help, in the right place, at the right time with services and support for all families with children aged 0 – 19 (or 25 with SEND). Extra support is available for families during pregnancy and in your baby's first years.

Below are a range of services the Family Hubs offer. Visit the website for a full list of services and how Family Hubs can support your family.



Maternity Care and Antenatal Sessions



Midwives and Health Visitors



Infant Feeding Support



Emotional Health and Wellbeing



Support for Parent and Carers



Stay and Play Sessions



Home Learning



Special Educational Needs and Disability Support (SEND)



Housing Support



Benefits and Welfare Advice



Email: Family_HubsTeam@sandwell.gov.uk
www.sandwellfamilyhubs.com



FREE HEALTHY START VITAMINS

The Healthy Start Vitamins are available **FREE** to pregnant women and young children living within Sandwell and provide important nutrients for growth and development.

You can get the vitamin tablets while you are pregnant and up to your baby's first birthday. They contain:

- folic acid which lowers the chance of babies having spinal problems
- vitamin C which helps the body's soft tissue
- vitamin D which helps babies' bones to develop properly.

Children can take vitamin drops if they:

- are less than 4 years old
- have less than 500ml (about one pint) of infant formula a day, as formula already has vitamins added to it.

Vitamin D is important for the development of healthy bones and teeth. As infants grow at a rapid rate it is important that both mum and baby get the required amount.



To collect your **FREE** vitamins please speak to your Health Visitor or Midwife. To find out further information, visit www.sandwell.gov.uk/HealthyStart



NHS HEALTH CHECKS

Are you between 40-74 years old and live in Sandwell? You may qualify for a free NHS Health Check to assess your risk of heart disease, stroke, kidney disease and diabetes.

This check involves a few questions and measurements, including a simple blood test to check your cholesterol. Afterward, you'll receive personalised advice on maintaining a healthy and active lifestyle, helping you stay in the best shape possible.

To see if you qualify for a Health Check, you can either call **0800 2545 163** or visit **nhshealthcheck.randox.com** online. Alternatively, you can get in touch with the Healthy Sandwell team, who will assess your eligibility at either **0800 011 4656** or **0121 569 5100**.



A limited offer of 12 weeks free gym membership is offered to anyone who completes a Health Check.



AGED BETWEEN 40 & 74?

Check to see if you're eligible for a **FREE HEALTH CHECK**

nhshealthcheck.randox.com
0800 2545 163



SCAN HERE



NHS WEST MIDLANDS GAMBLING HARMS SERVICE

If you are worried about your own or someone else's gambling, help is available. Gambling treatment services are delivered virtually or in person. There is also a digital programme which can be accessed 24/7.

The service offers support for specific problems experienced by individuals, and support and advice to family members and carers.

The West Midlands Gambling Harms Clinic is a free and confidential service open to anyone who is:

- 18 years old and above
- registered with a GP in Sandwell
- having problems with their gambling, resulting in harm to themselves and other people.



You can self-refer by going to www.midlandsgamblingclinic.org/self-referral or calling 0300 123 0996.



QUIT SMOKING TODAY

A free 12-week stop smoking programme is available for anyone who lives or works within Sandwell.

Support for quitting smoking is accessible at multiple locations throughout Sandwell and includes personalised one-on-one assistance, group sessions, text message support, digital advice, and access to nicotine replacement options, such as vaping. Our knowledgeable staff will guide you in finding the most effective approach tailored to your needs and can also provide information on prescription-only medications designed to help people quit smoking



Get in touch today by visiting smokefreesandwell.co.uk or calling 0121 740 0040 to start your quit journey.



GET HELP WITH ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

If you have a concern about your use of drugs or relationship with alcohol, there is help available.

At Cranstoun, you are respected, valued and understood. It's important that you have a safe space to find solutions and recover in a supportive environment. Cranstoun can open new doors, reduce harm and guide you to a healthy, happy and safe life.

Support is available for individuals who use alcohol and other drugs problematically and also for those affected by another's alcohol and/or drug use.



You can refer yourself for help by visiting cranstoun.org/substance-self-referral-form or calling 0121 553 1333.

Translation services are available.

Get rid of the maybes.

Worried you might have an STI? It's easy to check with our new home testing kit.

Order online today and know for sure.
www.freetest.me



Whoever you are, it's good to look after your sexual health. It's easy too!

We offer a range of sexual health services to help you stay in control of your body and feeling great, whether in clinics, at pharmacies or from your own home.

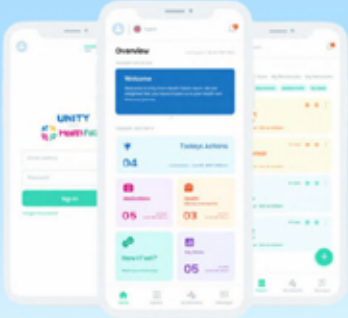
To find out more, including how to access free contraception and the morning after pill, please visit www.healthysandwell.co.uk/our-services/sexual-health





The UNITY app allows you to self-care in multiple languages.

www.healthfabric.co.uk



The UNITY app is free, allows you to share goals and self-care tasks, get remote support and all in the language of your choice.

Download the UNITY app from Health Fabric today.



FALLS PREVENTION DURING WINTER

The winter months bring additional challenges for many people in the wet and cold weather. Falling leaves, ice and snow can become dangerous.

Follow these basic tips to prevent falls this winter:

- take extra care if the ground is slippery
- wear shoes with good grip
- keep a salt and sand mixture handy to grit paths
- ask neighbours for help to clear paths or driveways in bad weather.

PREVENT FALLS BY IMPROVING BALANCE

Improving strength and balance is important. People aged 50 and over can access a free programme called FallsFree4Life Sandwell which is aimed at preventing falls.

If you or someone you know would like to receive a falls risk assessment and access to exercise sessions, please contact via email at fallsfree.sandwell@nhs.net or telephone on 0121 769 1327 or 0800 246 5290.



A WARM WELCOME GUARANTEED!

All Sandwell libraries and a wide range of community centres provide a Welcoming Space for anyone who needs it.

A Welcoming Space is somewhere you can go for help and advice, to join in free activities, to have a warm drink or to use the free Wi-Fi.

We also have access to services if you have money worries or need help to access the internet.

Wherever you live in Sandwell, you can find a nearby Welcoming Space.



You can find out more about Welcoming Spaces on our website. Go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/welcomingspaces

If you're not online and you want to find out about other community buildings in your area offering a Welcoming Space, visit any library or council office and staff will be happy to help you.



STRUGGLING WITH INCREASING BILLS?

We know many of our residents are continuing to struggle to make ends meet due to the cost of living crisis.

You can go online for advice and support from Sandwell Council, the Government, partner agencies and community organisations. Go to our Supporting Sandwell information hub - www.sandwell.gov.uk/supportingsandwell

There's advice and information on reducing your energy bills, accessing help if you need it and financial support. There are also face-to-face sessions in every town where you can sit down and chat with someone as part of our Cost of Living Support Programme.

If you're not online, you can contact our Welfare Rights team (see page 13) or call our benefits phone line on **0121 368 1155**.

Our benefits phone line is available Monday to Friday 8.45am – 5pm (Wednesdays, 9am-5pm).

You can also request council services and report problems to the council 24/7 through MySandwell.



It's easy to create an account –
go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/mysandwell



GET HELP WITH BENEFITS

Do you need advice on claiming benefits? Are you on a low income and wondering if you may be entitled to support?

Sandwell Council's Welfare Rights team gives free, independent and impartial advice about benefits.

During the last financial year, the Welfare Rights team advised 12,638 Sandwell residents and helped them to claim money they were entitled to totalling more than £19.5million.

The team can help:

- older people
- families with children
- people with health problems (including mental health)
- carers
- people with learning disabilities
- people in low paid work
- jobseekers.

They can:

- give general guidance and support
- help with benefit forms and applications
- support people who have been overpaid benefits
- advise on benefits payments when they are reduced or stopped
- offer representation at appeal tribunals.

GET IN TOUCH



To contact the Welfare Rights team, go to
www.sandwell.gov.uk/welfarerights

If you don't have access to the internet, call 0121 569 3158,
Monday to Friday, 9am – 4.30pm.

REPORT DAMP HOUSING

Are you concerned about damp or mould in your home? Is poor ventilation, poor heating or poor insulation causing a problem?

If you're concerned about condensation it is important that you know how and when to heat or ventilate your home and even when to dry clothes.



If you think your home needs a repair you should report it as soon as possible. You can report your repair by telephone on **0121 569 6000** between 8am - 8pm, or online via MySandwell 24 hours a day at www.sandwell.gov.uk/repairs



For more information about this, including a condensation booklet, please visit: www.sandwell.gov.uk/damp



If you are a private tenant and need support getting help from your landlord, please visit: www.sandwell.gov.uk/housingconditions



THINGS TO DO IN THE SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

We have a range of activities available to keep children entertained and active during school holidays!

It's a brilliant way to try new things, make friends and learn skills. There's plenty of choice including sports, music, art, cooking, days out and more. All providers are welcoming, and activities are safe and engaging.

When bookings open, if you meet the criteria you will receive an e-voucher with a unique code.



If you don't meet the criteria visit our website holidayactivities.sandwell.gov.uk for activities that provide FREE or subsidised places. Or you can follow HAF on social media – search @SandwellHAF



We also have more brilliant and free activities for children through Go Play – go to www.goplaysandwell.co.uk for details.

JOIN US AT OUR COMMUNITY HUBS

We've set up two community hubs in Rowley Regis and West Bromwich for when you need to speak to someone face-to-face.

If you need advice on an issue or query, help with accessing council services, well-being advice, housing information or just someone to talk to, the hubs are at:

- Central Library, High Street, West Bromwich, B70 8DZ – Tuesdays 10am to 4.30pm
- Blackheath Library, High Street, Blackheath, B65 0EA – Wednesdays 10am to 4.30pm

There's also access to computers and Wi-Fi, benefits and Council Tax advice, and you can get help to sign up for a MySandwell account if you want one.

This pilot project is to help us provide face-to-face help for people in both towns.

Please pass this message on to anyone living in these areas who needs to speak to someone in person.



PROTECT YOUR HOME THIS WINTER

West Midlands Police are working hard to tackle crime in your local area. During the darker nights, we are increasing our patrols in hot spot areas, acting on public intel, and engaging with partners to help keep you safe.



If you're heading out, remember to lock up your windows, doors, and porches. Check you have removed all valuables from your vehicle, locked it, and put your keys in a secure location.

Hosting an event?

We recommend keeping your side entrances, garden doors, and porches locked – this will deter thieves stealing car keys or valuables while you are distracted.

You can find tips on firework safety, burglary, and anti-social behaviour by searching **'WMP darker nights'**.

You can also report anti-social behaviour via 101 or through Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

A MESSAGE FROM WEST MIDLANDS FIRE SERVICE

As the nights get longer and the weather colder, we can all take steps to prevent accidental fires at home.

Check your heating appliances are in good working order.

If you haven't used your boiler, open fire or electric heater for a while, get it checked by a registered professional. Landlords must arrange annual gas safety checks in rented accommodation.

If you have an open fire or electric heater:

- don't sit too close, in case you set fire to your clothes or chair
- if you need to dry clothes in the same room as a heater or open fire, keep them well away from the heat
- don't overload plug sockets or extension leads, and avoid trailing heater cables where you might trip
- ensure portable heaters are switched off, unplugged and fully cooled before moving them
- hot water bottles, mattress toppers and higher TOG-rated duvets are safer than electric blankets.

We've got lots more safety advice on our website: **www.wmfs.net**

SEE

SOMETHING

DO

SOMETHING

SAFEGUARDING

IS EVERYONE'S

BUSINESS

Sandwell

Metropolitan Borough Council

SEE SOMETHING

If you are concerned that an adult with care and support needs is at risk of abuse or neglect and is unable to protect themselves

DO SOMETHING

- In an emergency dial **999**
- Call Sandwell on **0121 569 2266**
- Out of hours **0121 569 2355**

GET YOUR FLU VACCINATION

If you're at greater risk from flu, it's important to get the protection of vaccination in winter. The flu vaccine is given free on the NHS to adults who:

- are 65 and over (including those who will be 65 by 31 March 2024)
- have certain health conditions
- are pregnant
- are in long-stay residential care
- receive a carer's allowance, or are the main carer for an older or disabled person who may be at risk if you get sick
- live with someone who is more likely to get a severe infection due to a weakened immune system, such as someone living with HIV, someone who has had a transplant, or is having certain treatments for cancer, lupus, or rheumatoid arthritis.

The vaccine is safe, effective and is the best protection from these viruses. You need to have the flu vaccine every year because the viruses that cause flu change.

FLU VACCINE FOR CHILDREN

Flu in children can lead to serious problems such as bronchitis and pneumonia.

The children's flu nasal spray is offered every year to children to help protect them against flu - it is safe and works well. The nasal spray flu vaccine is free for:

- children aged six months to two years with an eligible long-term health condition
- children aged two to five years and not yet at school (children must be aged two years or above on 1 September 2023 to be eligible)
- all primary and secondary school children.

If your child is aged between 6 months and 2 years and has a long-term health condition, they will be offered a flu vaccine injection instead of the nasal spray. To find out more about flu and the flu vaccine, go to www.blackcountry.icb.nhs.uk/flu

WHERE TO GET THE FLU VACCINE?

You can get your flu vaccine from your local GP practice, community pharmacy and children will be offered the appropriate flu vaccination through schools.

You may be contacted directly from your GP practice to book an appointment, or you can book your flu vaccination at a pharmacy via the NHS website.



GET YOUR AUTUMN COVID-19 VACCINATION

The NHS is offering another COVID-19 vaccine to people who are most at risk from serious illness from the virus.

Those eligible include:

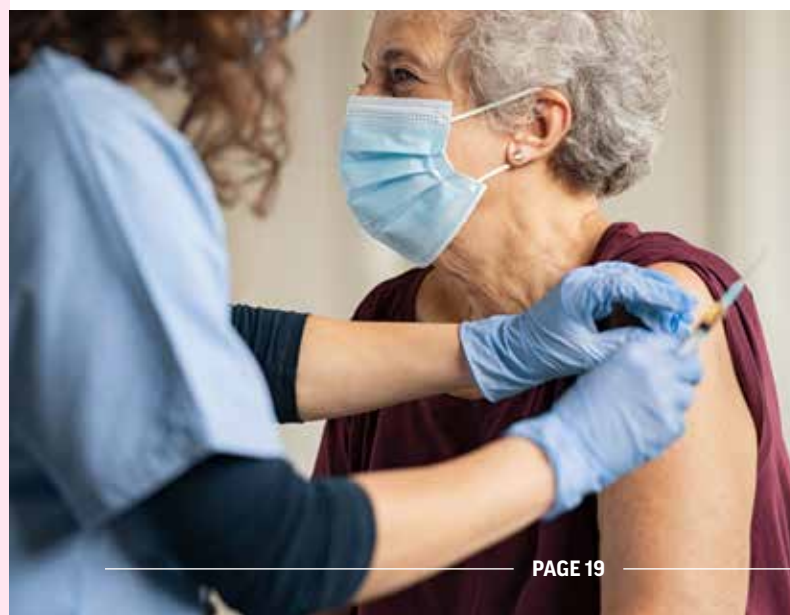
- all adults aged 65 and over
- care home residents
- frontline health and social care staff
- those at increased risk because they are pregnant or have a certain underlying health condition
- unpaid carers
- living with those at risk.



You can book online via the National Booking System, by downloading the NHS App, or by calling 119.

You may also be offered the vaccine by your GP surgery or other local NHS services.

Calls to 119 are free from mobiles and landlines. The booking service provides support in 200 different languages. Those who have difficulties communicating, hearing or are a British Sign Language (BSL) user can use textphone 18001 or the NHS 119 BS interpreter service.



CHILDHOOD IMMUNISATIONS

Young babies and children are more likely to get infections, so they need to be protected as early as possible. Childhood vaccines are given at different ages for different illnesses.

They begin when babies are two months old and continue through their teenage years. Your child needs several vaccines to protect them from infections, so it's important to complete the whole programme.

The childhood immunisation schedule is created to give early protection against infections that are most dangerous. This is important for diseases such as whooping cough, rotavirus, pneumonia, meningitis and others.



You can find out more by visiting
www.blackcountry.icb.nhs.uk/vaccinations



MEASLES, MUMPS AND RUBELLA (MMR)

Measles is a highly infectious disease which can lead to serious complications. In the most severe cases, it can develop into more threatening conditions such as pneumonia, especially in those with a weakened immune system.

Symptoms of measles include:

- a high fever
- rash
- cough
- runny nose
- watery eyes.

All children are invited for their first MMR vaccine on the NHS when they turn one. The second dose is given when they reach three years and four months of age. Having two doses of the vaccine provides the best protection against MMR.

Adults and older children can also be vaccinated at any age if they have not been fully vaccinated before and are encouraged to come forward if they haven't had two doses. Parents who are unsure if their child is up to date with all their routine vaccinations should check their child's Red Book (personal child health record), check the NHS app or contact their GP practice.



A NEW ONLINE PLATFORM FOR PREGNANT WOMEN AND PARENTS

A new NHS website has been created to support pregnant women, children and young people in the Black Country.

The 0-18 years website has been created with local healthcare professionals and contains a range of health advice in one place.

There's a large directory of common childhood illnesses such as rashes, coughs, asthma, sickness, earache, conjunctivitis, and head injuries as well as information on maternity and mental health and wellbeing. The information gives a traffic light system. You will know signs to look out for, where to seek help, how to keep an unwell child comfortable, and how long symptoms should last.



Find out more by visiting
www.blackcountry0-18.nhs.uk



HELP US HELP YOU

You should only call 999 or attend accident and emergency departments for serious accidents and for emergencies.

If you need medical help this winter, please choose well by following these four key steps:

1. **Remember self-care** – Many minor illnesses can be treated at home. Make sure you have painkillers such as paracetamol and ibuprofen, anti-diarrhoea medicines and a first aid kit including plasters, bandages, and a thermometer in your home. These items can be bought from many local supermarkets or pharmacies.
2. **Visit your local pharmacy** – Your local pharmacist should be your first port of call for any minor illnesses. Pharmacists are trained medical professionals who can help with a range of illnesses, including stomach pain, sore throats, and urine infections.
3. **Book a GP appointment** – If your symptoms don't go away, or a pharmacist can't help, make an appointment with your GP practice. If you need a repeat prescription, remember it can be sent to any pharmacy you choose, even if you're on holiday in the UK.
4. **Contact NHS 111** – If you need urgent medical help or advice, contact NHS 111 and they will direct you to the best service for you. You can contact the service online at [111.nhs.uk](https://www.111.nhs.uk) or by calling 111, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.



 Self Care Care for yourself at home Minor cuts & grazes Minor bruises Minor sprains Coughs and colds	 Pharmacy Local expert advice Minor illnesses Headaches Stomach upsets Bites & stings	 NHS 111 Non-emergency help Feeling unwell? Unsure? Anxious? Need help?	 GP Advice Out of hours: Call 111 Persistent symptoms Chronic pain Long term conditions New prescriptions	 UTCs Urgent Treatment Centres Breaks & sprains X-rays Cuts & grazes Fever & rashes	 A&E or 999 For emergencies only Choking Chest pain Blacking out Serious blood loss
--	--	--	--	--	---



YOUR GP PRACTICE IS HERE FOR YOU

WHAT TYPE OF APPOINTMENTS ARE ON OFFER?

Face-to-face appointments

Face-to-face appointments are available to all patients where there is a clinical need.

Video and telephone consultations

Appointments are also being delivered by telephone, or by using video calls and messaging to your mobile phone or computer from the comfort of your home, and without any need for you to travel to the practice.

E-consults

Many practice websites have forms for you to complete with your concerns, these are reviewed by a GP before advice is given or a member of the practice team calls you.

EVENING AND WEEKEND APPOINTMENTS

Did you know that GP practices in Sandwell now offer appointments on evenings and weekends?

Additional appointments will be available between 6.30pm and 8pm Monday to Friday, and between 9am and 5pm on Saturdays for all patients.

You may be offered an appointment at your GP surgery or another location nearby. This may be a:

- face to face appointment
- telephone consultation
- video consultation.

To book an appointment between these hours, please call your practice.

If you need an appointment out of hours, please telephone your surgery and listen to the out of hours information on the answer phone message. Alternatively, you can go to NHS 111 online at www.111.nhs.uk or by calling 111.

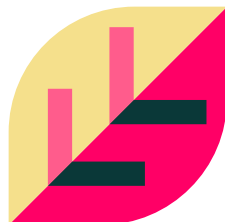
EXTENDED HEALTHCARE TEAMS IN GP PRACTICES

With demand on primary care increasing, GP practices are working differently to offer more appointments for their patients.

To help manage this demand on services, local GP practice teams now include a range of healthcare professionals who are highly skilled and knowledgeable in the areas they specialise in and can diagnose and treat a variety of health conditions.

The different healthcare professionals that make up extended healthcare teams, include:

- General practice nurse and nurse practitioners
- Healthcare assistants
- Physician associates
- GP registrars
- Practice-based pharmacists
- Paramedics
- Physiotherapists
- Health and wellbeing coaches
- Social prescribing link workers
- Mental health practitioners.



When patients contact the practice, a care navigator will ask for a brief outline of the problem. You may be asked questions when you contact the GP, this is so the teams can ensure you see the right professional. Where appropriate, care navigators will direct patients to another service such as a pharmacy or optician. Not all surgeries will have all these roles, but your practice reception team will help guide you to the most appropriate care as soon as possible when booking an appointment.



DR SOMMIYA ASLAM, A GP IN SANDWELL, ANSWERS SOME OF THE MOST FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FROM PATIENTS



WHY DO RECEPTIONISTS ASK QUESTIONS?

GP reception staff are a vital part of the healthcare team and ask questions to direct you to the best support.

WHAT DO I DO IF I NEED A GP APPOINTMENT, BUT MY PRACTICE IS CLOSED?

A range of appointments are now available on evenings and at weekends. Additional appointments will be available between 6.30pm and 8pm Monday to Friday, and between 9am and 5pm on Saturdays for all patients. You may be offered an appointment at your GP surgery or another location nearby. To book an appointment between these hours, please call your practice. If you need an appointment out of hours, please telephone your surgery and listen to the out of hours information on the answer phone message. Alternatively, you can go to NHS 111 online (www.111.nhs.uk) or by calling 111.

I'VE USED EVERYTHING OVER THE COUNTER SO WHY HASN'T MY COLD GOT BETTER?

All colds and most coughs and sore throats are caused by viral infections which are much more common than bacterial infections. They will normally get better within two or three weeks. We don't give antibiotics for colds because they will not relieve your symptoms or speed up your recovery with viral infections. They are usually prescribed if a GP thinks you could have a bacterial infection.

WHY CAN'T I JUST HAVE ANTIBIOTICS FOR AN ILLNESS?

Antibiotics are used to treat or prevent some types of bacterial infection and they work by killing bacteria or preventing them from spreading. However, they do not work for everything. Many mild bacterial infections get better on their own without using antibiotics, and they don't work for viral infections such as colds and flu, and most coughs. In fact, the more antibiotics are used to treat minor conditions, the more likely they are to become ineffective for treating more serious conditions.

PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUPS

Are you interested in finding out how your GP practice works and about the health services it delivers?

Patient participation groups work with their GP practice and ensure that the patient voice is heard. Groups work in different ways, some meet in person, others communicate with their practice online, but all are keen to welcome and involve new members.

GP practice patient groups give an opportunity for local people to get involved with their practice and influence local health services. Members contribute their views, make suggestions and provide feedback on services they may have used. Groups can also get involved with supporting local health initiatives. In some areas, patient groups come together in their local areas or across Primary Care Networks to share good practice, to discuss health issues and raise concerns.

If you are interested in finding out more about your own PPG, talk to your practice reception team, look on their website or contact involve.blackcountry@nhs.net



DOWNLOAD THE NHS APP

At home or on the move the NHS App provides a simple and secure way for you to access a range of NHS services on your smartphone or tablet.

You can use it wherever you are, at any time. It puts valuable information about your health and treatments at your fingertips. If your GP practice is connected to the app, you can register and verify your identity so you can:

- book and manage appointments
- order repeat prescriptions
- securely view GP medical records
- register as an organ donor.

Do more with the NHS App!

- Order repeat prescriptions
- Book appointments
- View your records

And much more...

NHS App

MAKE YOUR LOCAL PHARMACY YOUR FIRST PORT OF CALL THIS WINTER

Your local pharmacy should always be your first choice for help, advice and treatment for common conditions.

If you or your family become unwell, you may not always need to see a doctor or get a prescription. Local pharmacies offer many of the same services local GPs do. Community pharmacists are qualified health professionals who can offer expert advice on many minor ailments and conditions. They can help you with common problems such as coughs, colds, urine infections, aches, and pains, as well as perform health checks, screenings, and treatments.

WHAT COMMON CONDITIONS CAN A PHARMACIST HELP WITH?

Your local pharmacist can help with urine infections, allergies, athlete's foot, common cold, cold sores, conjunctivitis, constipation, coughs, cystitis, decongestants, diarrhoea, dry skin, earache, earwax, fever (children and adults), flu, haemorrhoids, headaches and migraines, heartburn and indigestion, mouth ulcers, nappy rash, oral thrush, pain, scabies, sore throat, sprains and strains, teething, threadworms, thrush and warts and verrucas.



You can find your local pharmacist by visiting the NHS website www.blackcountry.icb.nhs.uk/pharmacy

PHARMACY FIRST

Have you heard about the Pharmacy First service?

If you do not need to pay prescription charges, then you can access this service which gives you over-the-counter medicines rather than needing to see a GP to receive the medication on a free prescription. We hope that this service will reduce the number of people seeking treatment via a prescription from their GP or out of hours (OOH) provider, or via a walk-in centre or accident and emergency. Patients can register to access the service at the pharmacy and your GP practice will be notified of any intervention via a secure email. Check with your local pharmacy to see if they provide this service.



You can find participating pharmacies in Sandwell by visiting: www.blackcountry.icb.nhs.uk/pharmacy-first



KEEP YOUR MEDICINE CABINET WELL STOCKED THIS WINTER

Many minor illnesses can be treated by yourself at home with a well-stocked medicine cupboard. This could include painkillers such as paracetamol and ibuprofen, anti-diarrhoea medicines, antihistamines to help with allergies and a first aid kit including plasters, bandages and a thermometer. Most of these can be bought from your local supermarket or pharmacy.

It's important to remember that common winter illnesses such as coughs, colds, sore throats, sinusitis and earaches cannot be treated by antibiotics. They are best cared for at home by resting and drinking plenty of fluids.

Many people also suffer at this time of year with norovirus (or sickness bugs) and they are strongly advised not to visit anyone in hospital as they could be putting others at risk. There is no treatment for norovirus but it's important to keep yourself hydrated to prevent loss of fluids and practise good hand hygiene to help with prevention of the virus. If you have any children who have been ill with the virus, keep them away from nursery or school for 48 hours after their last episode of diarrhoea or vomiting.

WHAT ARE THE ALTERNATIVES TO A&E?

When you need medical help, it's important to choose the right service to make sure you get treatment as quickly as possible. Please only visit our A&E departments if your condition is serious or life threatening.

YOUR LOCAL PHARMACY

Your local pharmacy is a good place to start if you have a minor ailment such as a headache, cough, or sore throat. Pharmacists are medically trained and can give you expert advice on medicines and how they work, as well as help you decide whether you need to see a doctor.

NHS 111

This service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Patients can get medical advice, self-care support, prescriptions and in some cases book appointments. Go to **111.nhs.uk** or **call 111**.

YOUR GP SURGERY

Many GP practices now offer weekend access. If you need an appointment out of hours, please telephone your surgery and listen to the out of hours information on the answer phone message. Alternatively, you can go to NHS 111 online **www.111.nhs.uk** or by **dialling 111**.

YOUR LOCAL URGENT TREATMENT CENTRE

Urgent treatment centres provide medical help when it's not a life-threatening emergency.

They are usually overseen by doctors working with nurses. If you need one, you can often get tests like an ECG (electrocardiogram), blood tests or an X-ray. They can diagnose and deal with many common problems people go to A&E for, including:

- sprains and strains
- suspected broken bones
- injuries, cuts, and bruises
- wound dressing
- stomach pain
- coughs, colds and breathing problems
- vomiting and diarrhoea
- skin infections and rashes
- high temperature in children and adults
- mental health concerns.

They are open seven days a week and services are located at:

- Urgent Treatment Centre, Sandwell Hospital, Little Lane entrance, West Bromwich, B71 4HJ (open 9am-9pm)
- Summerfield Urgent Care Centre, 134 Heath Street, Winson Green, Birmingham, B18 7AL (open 8am-8pm)
- Urgent Care Centre, City Hospital, Dudley Road entrance, Birmingham, B18 7QH (open 10am-11pm)

LOOK AFTER YOUR WELLBEING

Healthy Sandwell have created a one stop shop of local mental health services within the community as well as from the NHS. This directory of services is here to support your mental health and wellbeing.

The information is broken down into support for:

- adults
- children and young people
- suicide prevention
- bereavement
- drugs and alcohol
- training opportunities.

You will find information on support groups for men, expectant parents and new parents and carers.



To explore what is available in your community for yourself and others, please visit:
www.healthysandwell.co.uk/sandwell-mental-health-lander-2023

Black Country Women's Aid
we listen, we support, we care

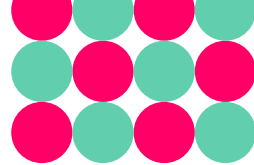
Black Country Women's Aid support women, men and children affected by domestic abuse and sexual violence.
Call our **24-hour helpline** on 0121 552 6448
Text or **WhatsApp** on 07584 466 181 (9am-9pm weekdays)
Visit: www.blackcountrywomensaid.co.uk

HEALTH AND WELLBEING SERVICES NEAR YOU

There are many people who face difficulties, be it money matters or not knowing who to turn to for some advice.

Help is at hand through the Route2Wellbeing website with information on hundreds of places where you can find that little bit of extra help. All activities and services are local and open to all residents.

You can find the information at **www.route2wellbeing.info** – give it a try!



URGENT CARE

The following services can all be accessed by patients and carers if needed.

Walk-in centres – for urgent medical help.

They are open seven days a week and services are located at:

- Urgent Treatment Centre, Sandwell Hospital, Little Lane entrance, West Bromwich, B71 4HJ (open 9am-9pm)
- Urgent Care Centre, City Hospital, Dudley Road entrance, Birmingham, B18 7QH (open 10am-11pm)
- Summerfield Urgent Care Centre, 134 Heath Street, Winson Green, Birmingham, B18 7AL (open 8am- 8pm)

Accident and Emergency Departments – for life-threatening emergencies.

- Sandwell Hospital, Little Lane, West Bromwich, B71 4HJ
- City Hospital, Dudley Road, Birmingham, B18 7QH

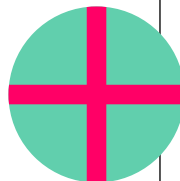
Care Navigation Centre – for urgent and non-urgent referrals.

Services available include:

- Palliative Care Hub
- iCares
- Care Homes Team
- District Nursing
- Continence Service
- Foot Health
- Physiotherapy
- Respiratory Service
- Heart Failure Service
- Wheelchairs Service

To find out more about any of these services, contact the Care Navigation Centre on 0121 507 2664, seven days a week, between 8am and 8pm.

Further services are available through your GP and other healthcare professionals such as Virtual Wards which delivers hospital care at home and Single Point of Access, which assesses a patient and refers them to the correct service for treatment. They will assess your needs and signpost you to alternative services suitable to you.



MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING SUPPORT IN SANDWELL

It's important that we look after our mental health and wellbeing the same way we do with our physical health. If we suffer a physical injury, we know what to do to feel better - rest and take weight off the injured area. The same goes for our mental health. When we notice changes in how we feel or behave, there are steps we can take to improve our overall wellbeing.

The key is to recognise these changes early on and take action before they worsen. We can live happier, healthier lives by prioritising our mental health and taking proactive steps to care for ourselves.



SELF-CARE

HOW YOU/SOMEONE MIGHT BE FEELING...

- experiencing certain emotions or situations that make you feel not quite right, stressed, or out of sorts
- feeling isolated or lonely
- dealing with bereavement
- difficulty managing anger
- struggling with low self-esteem
- losing interest in things you normally enjoy
- avoiding contact with others
- drinking more alcohol on a regular basis.

WHAT CAN YOU/SOMEONE DO?

There are several self-care strategies that can be helpful in overcoming feelings of isolation or loneliness, managing anger, and boosting self-esteem. One way to improve mental wellbeing is by following the five steps to mental wellbeing. These include connecting with other people, being physically active, learning new skills, giving to others, and paying attention to the present moment through mindfulness or relaxation techniques.



You can discover tips, guides, tools and activities to support and improve mental health at www.nhs.uk/mental-health/self-help/



MENTAL HEALTH HELPLINE

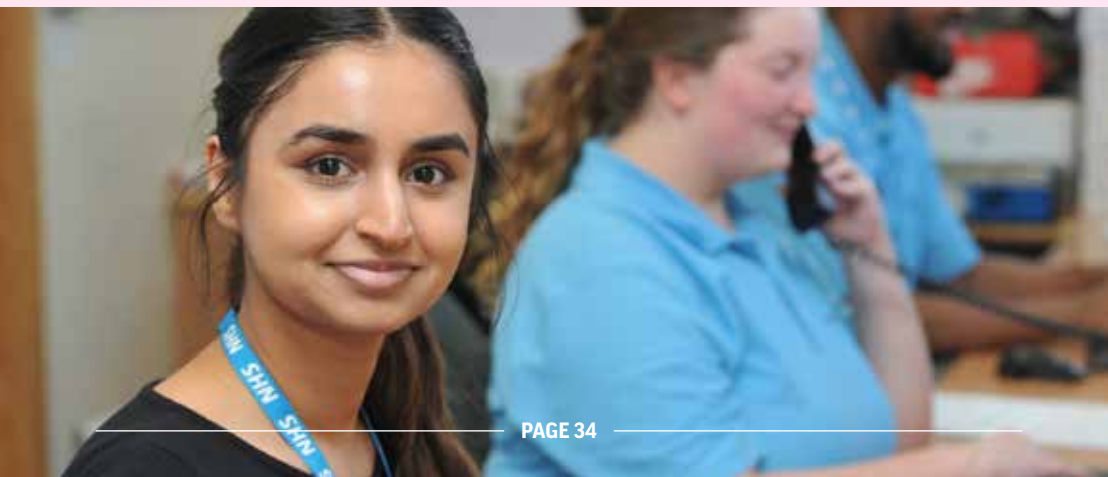
HOW YOU/SOMEONE MIGHT BE FEELING...

- like you're at risk of developing mental health problems
- that you are finding it difficult to manage a diagnosed common mental health problem
- that you need support for your mental health but don't know where best to go
- experiencing mental health distress
- that you need information, advice and support from a trusted source.

WHAT CAN YOU/SOMEONE DO?

There is a 24-hour mental health helpline, operating seven days a week and is available to Black Country residents of all ages. If you are experiencing increased distress or anxiety during these uncertain times, please don't suffer in silence, pick up the phone and speak to one of our specialist mental health professionals who will be able to support you.

Contact our 24/7 mental health support line by calling 0800 008 6516 or you can text the service by contacting 07860 025 281.



SANDWELL TALKING THERAPIES

HOW YOU/SOMEONE MIGHT BE FEELING...

- low mood and tearful
- down
- anxious, including:
 - panic attacks, obsessive and compulsive thoughts and behaviour (OCD)
 - phobias, social anxiety, health anxiety
 - dealing with trauma such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- struggling with every-day tasks
- very stressed/unable to relax
- hoarding
- insomnia and problems with sleep.

WHAT CAN YOU/SOMEONE DO?

Sandwell Talking Therapies for anxiety and depression offers brief therapy for people experiencing common mental health problems such as low mood, depression, anxiety and stress.

You can refer yourself into your local talking therapies service, without seeing your GP. If you are 16 or over and registered with a GP in Sandwell, we can help.



You can self-refer to us by calling 0121 612 6650 9am - 5pm, Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays) or self-refer online at www.sandwelltalkingtherapies.nhs.uk

The team are based at:

Whiteheath Medical Centre, Badsey Road, Oldbury, B69 1EJ



SPECIALIST MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

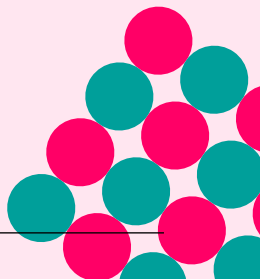
HOW YOU/SOMEONE MIGHT BE FEELING...

- hearing voices or seeing, feeling, tasting or smelling things that aren't there (hallucinations)
- erratic and distressing behaviour, including impulsive actions and not being able to control your emotions
- extreme fluctuations in mood, including:
 - extreme high and low moods
 - suicidal thoughts that come and go
- difficulty concentrating or thinking, sometimes due to being preoccupied with unusual experiences, beliefs or fears
- risky, challenging or violent behaviour including high risk of criminal activity.

WHAT CAN YOU/SOMEONE DO?

To be able to get support from secondary mental health services, you will most likely need a referral from your GP, or another health, care or public sector professional who may be supporting you with your mental health and wellbeing. This includes hospital, GP staff, police, courts, housing associations and staff from your local council.

Secondary mental health services, also known as specialist services, can offer education and treatment on certain mental health illnesses. They can help you find ways of coping and managing your mental health and wellbeing so that you can be supported to live well in your home or community.



CRISIS OR EMERGENCIES

HOW YOU/SOMEONE MIGHT BE FEELING...

- like you may seriously harm or injure yourself or other people
- are suicidal or like you want to die
- no longer able to cope or be in control of your situation
- extreme distress or extreme changes in behaviour.

WHAT CAN YOU/SOMEONE DO?

If you already get mental health support from a health or care organisation, please contact the team that provides you with treatment. You may have a care or safety plan already. This will help with your treatment and will tell you who to contact in a crisis.

You can also get support in a mental health crisis by:

- **Calling NHS 111, a 24-hour helpline**
- **Booking an emergency appointment with your GP practice. Outside of normal surgery hours you can still phone your GP, but you will usually be directed to an out-of-hours service.**



The banner features a dark blue background with a blurred image of a hand holding a smartphone. On the left, the text '24/7 helpline' is in large white font, with 'here to support you with your mental health' below it. A white speech bubble contains the text 'Feel unable to cope and need to speak to someone urgently?'. Below this, contact information is provided: 'Call 0800 008 6516' and 'Text 07860 025 281'. The NHS logo and 'Black Country Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust' are in the top right. A circular logo with 'Rethink Mental Illness.' is in the bottom right.

24/7 helpline
here to support you with your mental health

Feel unable to cope and need to speak to someone urgently?

Call 0800 008 6516
Text 07860 025 281

NHS
Black Country Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust

Rethink Mental Illness.

LOCAL SERVICES

Attend FREE health and wellbeing courses at The Recovery College

THE RECOVERY COLLEGE

The Recovery College courses range from half day workshops to 8 week courses in mental health, employment and volunteering, life skills, the arts and wellbeing, delivered digitally and face to face in the community.

Visit: www.therecoverycollege.co.uk

Telephone: 0121 543 4061

Email: info@therecoverycollege.co.uk

LET'S TALK SANDWELL

Do you or someone you know struggle with social isolation or loneliness? Let's Talk is here to help! This service offers support through face-to-face, telephone, and video sessions to anyone aged 18+ in Walsall, Wolverhampton, Sandwell and Dudley.

Professional referrals are accepted, but clients can also self-refer by calling or emailing. With six 1-1 sessions, Let's Talk professionals aim to build confidence and social networks while encouraging participants to join in with activities and signposting them to other services and groups. Don't let loneliness take over, reach out to Let's Talk today for more information.

Telephone: 01922 608500 or 01922 922443

Email: Bchft.letstalk@nhs.net

SANDWELL SANCTUARY HUB

If you feel like you need to access face to face support out of usual mental health service hours then you can visit the Sanctuary Hubs, available within each of the boroughs of the Black Country.

Sandwell Sanctuary Hub is based at Hope Place, 321 High Street, West Bromwich, B70 8LU.

The Sanctuary Hub can provide emotional support to those in distress, in need of reassurance or at times when people need to be listened to most and are open Monday – Friday, 6pm – 11pm; and Saturday and Sunday 12noon – 11pm.

No referral is required. You must be aged 18+ and have live in or be registered with a GP in Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall or Wolverhampton.

Visit: www.kaleidoscopeplus.org.uk/sanctuary-hub

Telephone: 0121 289 6111 or 0121 565 5605

Email: hub@kaleidoscopeplus.org.uk



Get **Cost of Living** tips
and advice to your phone

Add us on WhatsApp - 07585 997453
and text **YES**



TO UNSUBSCRIBE TEXT STOP

Visit our Supporting Sandwell
online information hub

www.sandwell.gov.uk/supportingsandwell