

Performance Spotlights



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GROWING UP IN SANDWELL



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Sandwell has been chosen to take part in the Government's Test, Learn and Grow programme. This £100 million national initiative aims to make public services work better. In Sandwell, the focus will be on helping young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) as they turn 16 and leave school. The project will involve local experts, including the Connexions team, the Employment and Skills team, and Sandwell College.



The Council will continue supporting families of 46,000 children with vouchers during school holidays through £6million of Household Support Fund funding over the next financial year.

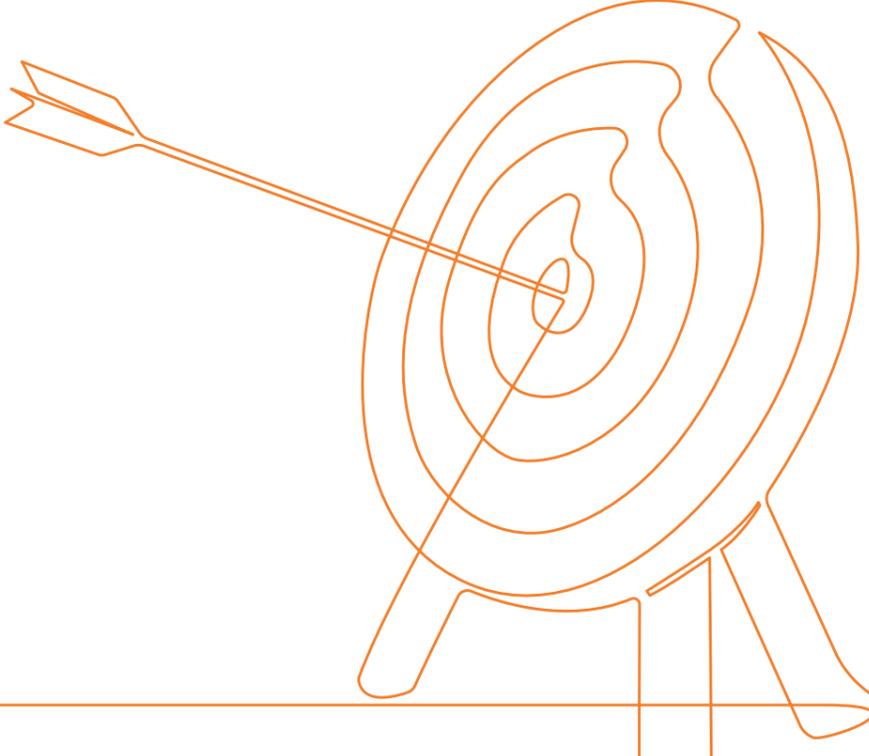


Children & Young People Now Awards 2025

The Department for Education has asked Sandwell to be a pilot partner in tackling severe school absence. The project will help us learn more about the best ways to reduce high levels of absence. By working with a small group of local authorities across the country, the programme will explore the barriers that stop young people from attending school, try out solutions, and test what works, with the aim of using the findings to improve things nationally.



The Youth Service team has been shortlisted for the Children & Young People Now Awards 2025 which showcases innovation and outstanding practice across the children's services sector. This nomination recognises the work the Youth Service does to support, protect, and empower children and care experienced young people. In particular, it focuses on the work to develop volunteers and create a workforce development strategy called 'Grow Our Own' youth workers, addressing the national shortage in the profession. The awards ceremony will take place later in November.



LIVING IN SANDWELL



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A shop in West Bromwich which sold vapes to children, illegal cigarettes and counterfeit goods has been closed down by Trading Standards. Council officers, supported by West Midlands Police, raided the shop as part of the Safer 6 campaign, where they discovered a hydraulic platform under a toilet floor containing approximately 21,000 illegal cigarettes and 120 illegal vapes. Counterfeit items including suspected fake Labubu dolls were also found.



The percentage of repairs completed within the expected timeframe for Council homes has improved over the past year. In Quarter 1, we achieved 94.94% completion for emergency repairs, just shy of our 95% target. For routine repairs, the completion rate has increased from 71.49% last year to 77.37% in Quarter 1 this year, although there is still progress to be made to meet our goal. To address the backlog, we have engaged the building and development company Seddons to clear outstanding repairs, allowing the Council to concentrate on new repair requests. Additionally, we are reviewing our policies and procedures to reduce repair waiting times moving forward. We anticipate continued improvement in performance throughout 2025/26.



HEALTHY IN SANDWELL



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A new community service called Stop for Life Sandwell has launched to help people quit smoking and live healthier lives. It's run by behaviour change specialists ICE and is free for anyone who lives, works, or has a GP in Sandwell. The support on offer includes:

- One-to-one advice and encouragement
- Personalised quit plans
- Guidance on Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) and vapes, plus 12 weeks of free products
- Access to the Best-You healthy lifestyles app



The Sandwell Language Network (SLN) contract has been extended. This programme offers free, community-based English language classes across the borough. It also aims to improve health and job opportunities, reduce isolation, and bring communities together by helping people develop basic English skills.

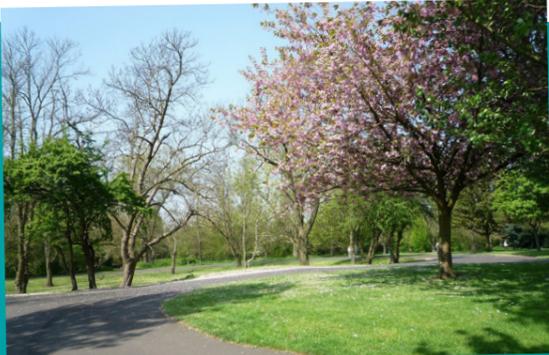
140 staff in finance and social work have now been trained in the new way of working with Direct Payments. The Direct Payments Support Service helps people who get money from the council to arrange and manage their own care, rather than the council organising services for them. So far, 3 panels have taken place to review more complex cases, with more planned during the year. This means we expect to more people opting to use Direct Payments over the next 6 months.



THRIVING ECONOMY IN SANDWELL



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Sandwell has achieved a record-breaking 15 Green Flag Awards for 2025/26. The ceremony for the West Midlands, East of England and East Midlands, was held in Sandwell for the first time in July. This year West Smethwick Park has achieved the prestigious standard following a £5.1million restoration and improvement project.



The Council continues to lead the way in maintaining roads and tackling potholes according to a recent MEL Research survey, which showed that 61% of Sandwell residents were satisfied with road maintenance in 2024 compared to a local government benchmark of 27% (Local Government Association). 65% of Sandwell residents were satisfied with pavement maintenance compared to a local government benchmark of 41% (Local Government Association).



UK's Real Estate Investment & Infrastructure Forum (UKREiiF) is a major annual event/festival in the UK that brings together stakeholders involved in real estate, infrastructure, development and regeneration. The West Bromwich Masterplan was launched at UKREiiF in May. It received a fantastic response from the sector with feedback showing it was one of the three big highlights from the West Midlands Pavillion, an indication that Sandwell is punching above/at its weight at regional and national levels.



ONE COUNCIL ONE TEAM



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Region shares new story for Sandwell

Approximately 200 people from businesses, community groups and other local organisations attended the launch of the Sandwell Story on Wednesday 25 June; a project to celebrate, champion and bring people together in making Sandwell a great place to live, learn, work and visit. The launch follows work over the past year to set up the partnership across the borough to promote what Sandwell has to offer, tackle the area's challenges together and raise aspirations and improve outcomes for people living in the area.



The new Neighbourhood Services model has been launched, with a dedicated team, marking an important milestone in how the Council serves communities. The model focuses on a more localised approach, building on existing town-based leadership roles and aiming to embed community leadership at the ward level. It emphasises multi-agency collaboration, a single point of referral, and a person-centred approach to problem-solving.



Sandwell has committed recruiting 100 new apprentices. The first wave of council apprenticeship vacancies was launched at a Careers in Sandwell event in August at the Operations and Development Centre at Roway Lane, and the Council Chambers in the Council House. The 100 apprenticeships commitment builds on the council's apprenticeship programmes' previous successes which have seen Sandwell council ranked 64th in the Top 100 Apprenticeship Employer list 2025 and finalists in the Large Employer of the Year (West Midlands) at the National Apprenticeship and Skills Awards 2024 (having won the regional round in 2023).

WE ARE SANDWELL



There was a £3.363m underspend for the General Fund, which is the primary financial account used to manage the funding and expenditure for the majority of the Council's public services (which is an underspend of 1.0% when compared with the Council's net budget of £333.008m). This is a significant achievement given the wider local government context with many authorities facing severe financial difficulties.

