

## New members sign up

The conferences successfully attracted a number of new faces. These included first time conference-goers Margaret Colledge and Arthur Plant both of whom are now coming along regularly to their local town forums and are already impressed with Agewell.

"I've been widowed for two years," says Margaret, "and go to the Young at Heart group at Springfield Club. Pauline from Agewell came to talk to us and my neighbour and I thought we'd go along to the Rowley Regis conference. I found it very interesting so I joined the forum. I like to hear what others have got to say. They say what I'm thinking!"



Arthur Plant and his wife went to the Tipton conference. "It was very informative," he says. "I met a couple of friends there including someone I used to work with. It's given me a few ideas. We've now joined the Tipton Forum which is good but needs more people. Times are hard at the moment so it's more important than ever to voice your opinions."



## April roadshows

Whilst Agewell is a very active organisation which has achieved a great deal, our continued success relies on getting more and more older people involved. We're always looking for new members and guarantee that everyone who gets involved will find it rewarding.

In April we'll be starting our roadshows again when we go out to groups across Sandwell to explain more about what we do. If you'd like us to come along to your group, please call us on **0121 289 3038**.

**There was plenty of information to be gathered about local groups, organisations and services at the conferences. Thanks to our exhibitors:** Agewell Older People's Champions, Midlife Planning, Active Sandwell, Putting People First (Sandwell Council), Living Well in Later Life/Dignity Campaign (Sandwell Council/Sandwell PCT), Welfare Rights (Sandwell Council), Libraries, Self Care (Expert Patient Programme), Local Transport Consultation (Sandwell PCT), Cares, Time to Trade, U3A, Pension Service, Volunteer Bureau, PALS, Ideal for All and Sandwell Leisure Trust.



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Sandwell **NHS**  
Primary Care Trust



## Agewell Conferences 2010

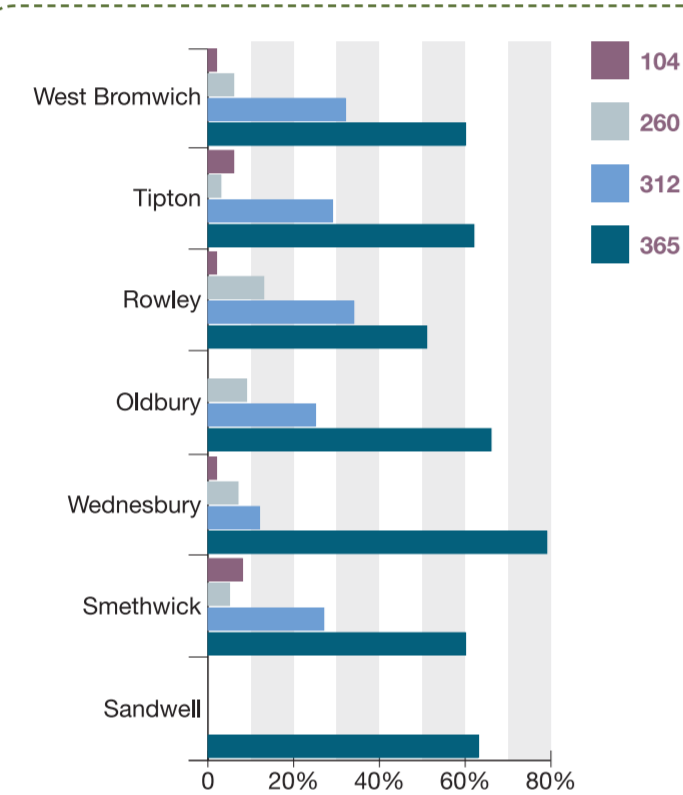
# LIVING WELL, LOOKING FORWARD

# How much do you know about the services provided by your GP?

A key part of each conference was an interactive keypad consultation, designed to see just how much delegates knew about their local GP and pharmacy services. Everyone was asked a series of questions and had to select which they thought were the right answers.

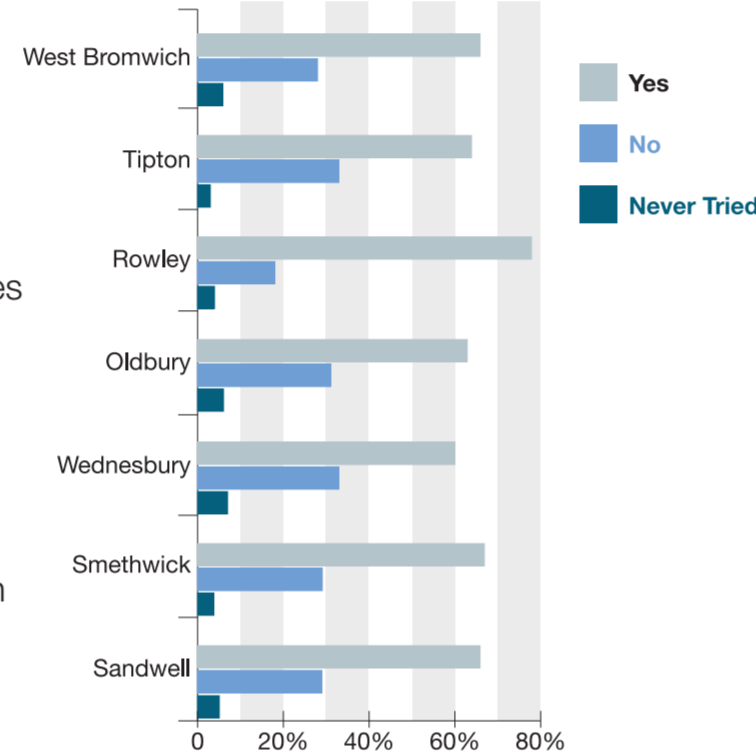
"We asked a mixture of questions to gauge people's knowledge about issues such as how much money the PCT receives and how many GP practices there are borough-wide. We also wanted to give delegates useful information about local health services including the Walk-in Centre and Pharmacy First so they know when to use them," explains Deb Davies, Agewell Manager. "It was interesting to see how the responses differed from town to town."

## Here are some of the key findings from the consultation...



### The last time you tried to see a doctor fairly quickly (within the next two working days) were you able to get an appointment?

Overall, two thirds of delegates could get an appointment. However, this experience varied from town to town. Nearly 80% of Rowley delegates said yes, but this fell to 60% of Wednesbury delegates. One third of Tipton and Wednesbury delegates hadn't been able to get an appointment quickly.

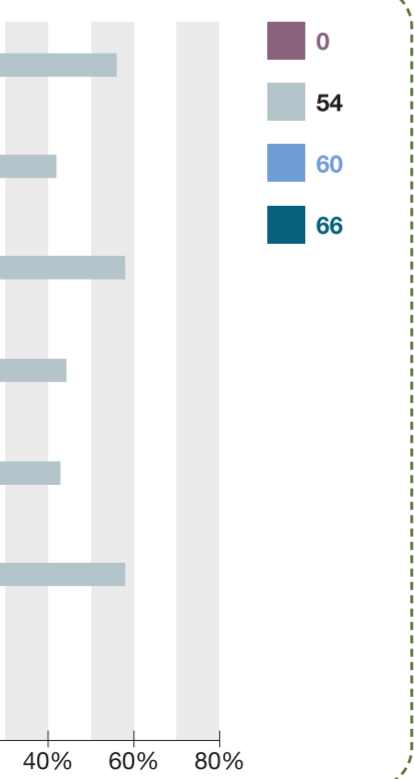
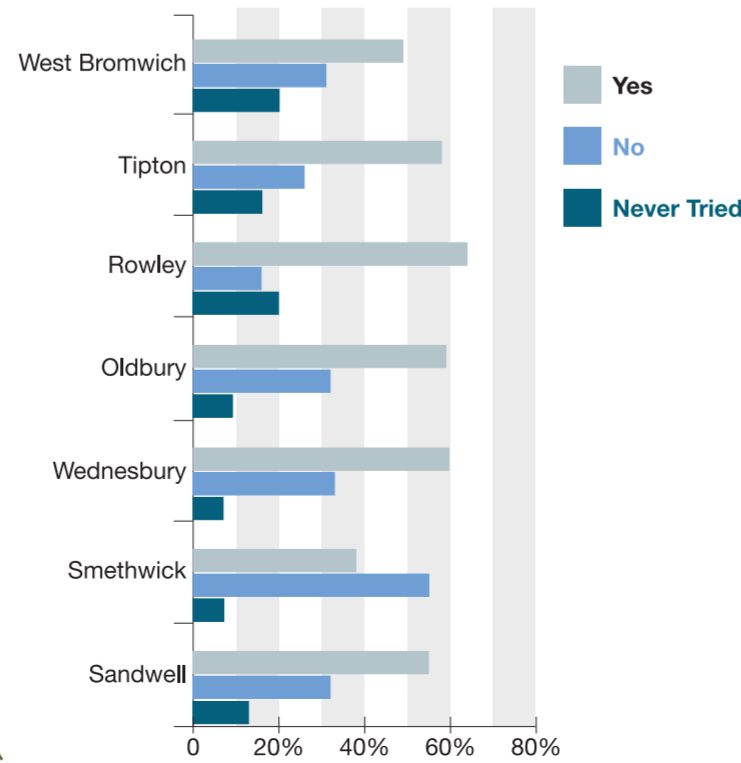


The average GP appointment is **10** minutes long

Sandwell PCT receives **£557 million** a year

### The last time you tried to book ahead to see a doctor (more than two full working days) were you able to get an appointment?

Overall, just 55% of all delegates were able to book ahead for an appointment. Again Rowley delegates had been most successful followed by Wednesbury. Smethwick delegates were the most unsuccessful with 55% being unable to book ahead for an appointment.



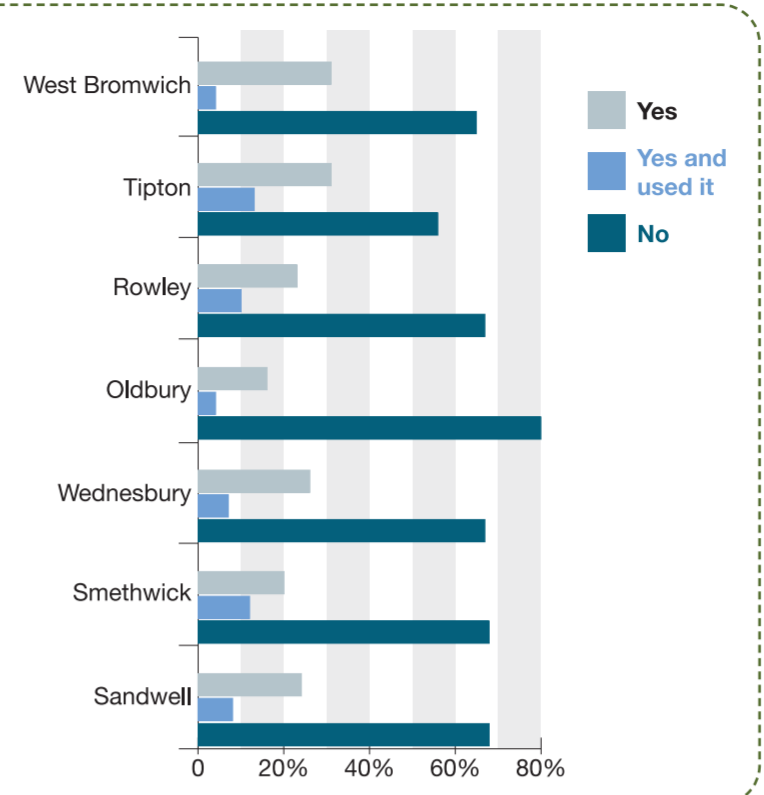
Out of the 66 GP Practices in Sandwell how many offer appointments before 8am or after 6.30pm? The correct answer is 60 but it is clear that a lot of older people aren't aware of these appointment times.

Overall, only one fifth of delegates chose the right answer. The most popular answer across all towns was 54. Interestingly a lot of delegates across all towns thought the answer was zero.

### Have you heard of the NHS Choices website?

Overall, only a quarter of all delegates had heard of the website and less than 10% had actually used it.

80% of Oldbury delegates hadn't heard of it. 31% of West Bromwich residents had heard of it but only 4% had used it.



There are **66** GP Practices in Sandwell

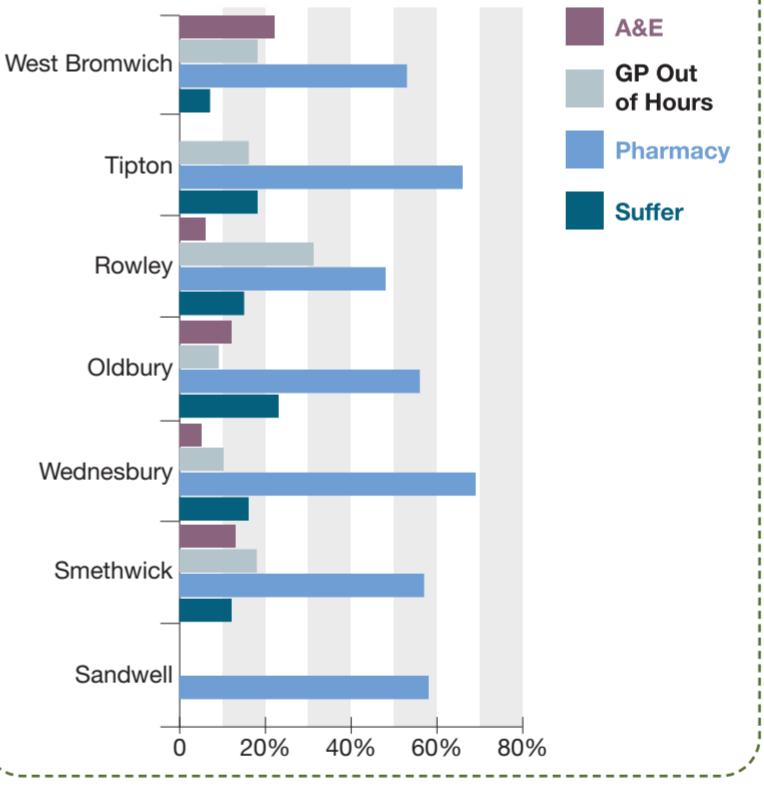
There are **80** community pharmacies / chemist shops in Sandwell

About **5 million** prescription items were dispensed in Sandwell pharmacies in 2007/08

**£45 million** is spent in General Practices

### If you have a minor illness over a weekend what should you do?

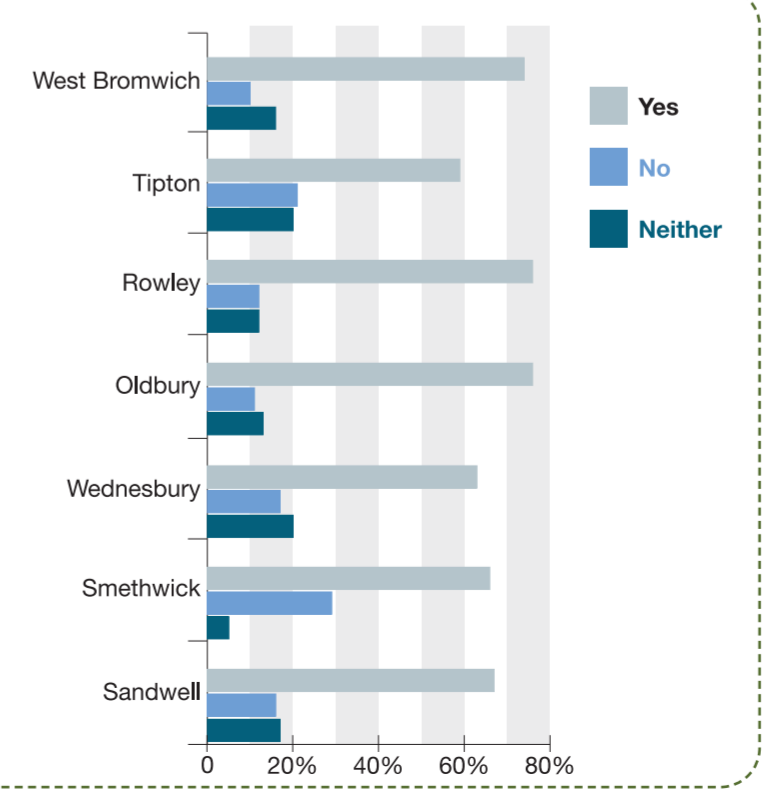
The correct answer was to go to a pharmacist. Overall, nearly 60% of all delegates chose this answer including 69% of Wednesbury delegates and 66% of Tipton delegates. However, nearly a quarter of Oldbury residents felt they should just suffer at home, nearly a third of Rowley delegates would use their GP out of hours service and a fifth of West Bromwich delegates would go to A&E.



### Are you generally satisfied with your GP Practice opening hours?

Overall, nearly 70% of delegates are happy with their GPs opening hours. Delegates from Rowley, Oldbury and West Bromwich all showed high levels of satisfaction.

The highest percentage of delegates who were not satisfied are from Smethwick and Tipton.



## What Did You Think?

The evaluation forms which all delegates were invited to fill in at the end of the conferences proved very interesting.

Overall, the majority of people attending found the conferences good in terms of interest and enjoyment, and many particularly liked the keypad consultation.

Here is just some of the valuable feedback:

### What have you learnt at today's event?

- Poetry can be fun
- Information about healthcare
- How much medicine is wasted every year
- Details of the new hospital
- Statistics and facts
- About Expert Patients
- Opening times of chemists
- How to get personalised budgets
- Activities available in Sandwell
- Things available for OAPs in Sandwell
- Various phone numbers to call for help
- That few people offer views/ask questions
- The hard work different groups put in

### What have you enjoyed?

- The good feeling I get due to being involved in a social group
- PCT update
- Agewell's Got Talent
- The people
- Meeting new members
- The atmosphere
- Learning more about the NHS
- Having a chat with new and old friends
- Exhibitors – information and knowledge
- Interesting talks
- Useful tips
- The way it was put over to help us understand
- Nice to have somewhere to go to get out of the house
- All of it

### What could be improved?

- Introduce the Agewell staff
- More information available about the Forums
- Bigger venue
- Directions for newcomers to the event
- Advertise it in the local press
- More people from different communities
- More information in my language so I can read and absorb directly
- More entertainment
- People – their stories about what they are up to out in their communities

### Suggestions for future events

- Focus on pensioner poverty
- More conferences
- Something about dementia
- More activities
- Try to involve more people in consultations

## Introduction

**In September and October 2010 we held not just one but six separate conferences - one in each of the six towns in Sandwell - and they proved to be a resounding success.**

Delegate numbers were up by 40% with more than 285 people attending in total. Most importantly holding local town conferences encouraged new faces to come along and pledge their support.

Chair of Agewell, Edna Barker, explains: "Moving to six conferences was a very positive step as it meant we could reach out to more people in their own areas. People could take ownership of their local conference. A number of new features such as the talent spots and the hobby corner also proved successful in encouraging attendance."



Agewell has now been in existence for 14 years and has an active membership of 883 which is growing daily. It is an integral part of Sandwell Primary Care Trust (PCT) and has a vital role to play in both the PCT and the council on issues which affect local older people. Membership of Agewell Sandwell, the organisation's strategic arm, now stands at 54 which shows that we're a force to be reckoned with.

**883**  
active members

**Our aim is to enable older people to influence the way local services are provided and to enjoy the best quality of life.**

## Agewell's got talent!

**Several Agewell members took to the floor for the 'Agewell's Got Talent' spot and showcased talents we never knew they had.**

Our thanks to the singers from the Lodge Road Extend Group (West Bromwich) and soloist Bill Archer (Wednesbury), budding actors Sandra Tyrrell, Rose Fleming, Victoria Adebeyi and Sue Howard (Smethwick), dance group, Langley Bibis (Oldbury), plus local poets Pauline Hodgetts and Gary Bedford (Tipton), Tony Griffiths and Mandy Winning (Rowley Regis) and Janet Todd (Oldbury). The West Bromwich conference also enjoyed poems penned by the late Bob Tidmarsh.



## Speakers show their support

**Over the years, the Agewell conferences have been supported by an impressive line-up of quality speakers and this year was no exception.**



We were honoured to have the Mayor of Sandwell, Councillor Mrs Pauline Hinton, Deputy Mayor of Sandwell, Councillor Mrs Joyce Underhill and the Council Town Leads, Councillor Mrs Barbara Price and Councillor Roger Horton addressing our delegates.



At four of the conferences, Richard Nugent, Chair of Sandwell PCT, spoke about the important changes facing the NHS in general and Sandwell PCT in particular. Andy Williams, Director of Commissioning and Jon Dicken Deputy Director of Commissioning, focused on these issues at the other two conferences.

This meant delegates were able to find out more about major plans for the future and what this will mean for them.

## Hobby corner

**Another new feature, the Hobby Corner, proved popular where members of each Agewell Forum showcased their creative talents. These included knitting, card making, crocheting and painting.**

At the Rowley Regis conference, the Britannia Sons of Rest Arts group exhibited cards they'd made. Tutor Bev Capewell said: "Our group meets every Wednesday in Britannia Road from 9.15am-2.45pm, with card making in the mornings and watercolour painting lessons in the afternoon.

"We're looking for more people to join. A good range of ages come along and everyone's welcome whether you're an experienced painter or a complete beginner."

