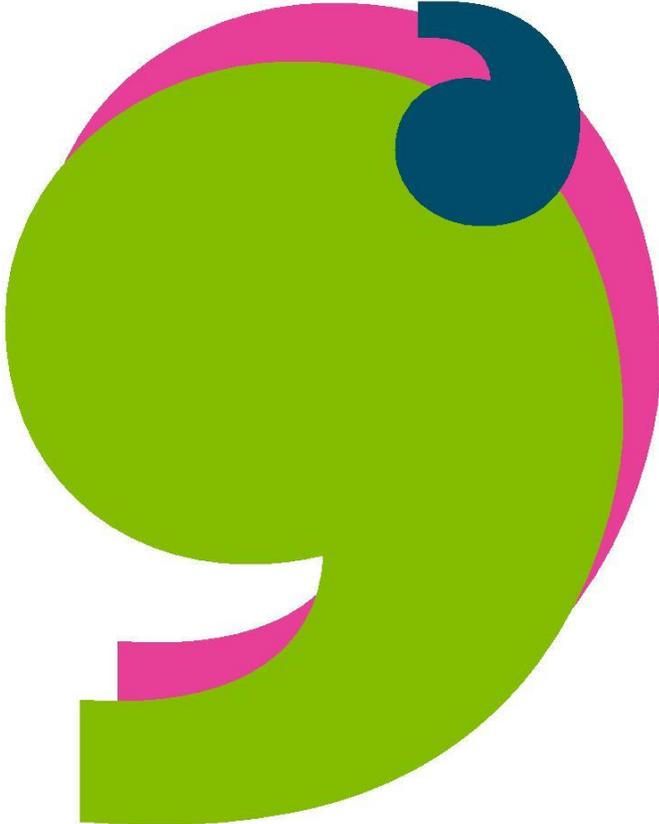




Enter and View report

Quality Checkers visit to
Sanford House

June 2018



healthwatch
Swindon

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1 Introduction

1.1 Details of visit

Details of visit:	
Service address:	Swindon Advice and Support Centre Sanford House, Sanford Street, SN1 1HE
Service Providers:	Various voluntary and community organisations
Date and Time:	Friday 29 June at 11am
Authorised Representatives:	Lucy Gibson, Pam Forde, Mark Court, Alison Evans, Tammy Peapell, Kerry Smith
Contact details (Healthwatch Swindon):	Healthwatch Swindon, Sanford House, Sanford Street, Swindon, SN1 1HE

1.2 Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Swindon and the Quality Checkers thank service users and staff at Sanford House for their contribution to the visit and this report.

1.3 Disclaimer

Please note that this report relates to findings observed on the date and time of the visits. It is not a representative portrayal of the experience of service users and staff, only an account of what was observed and contributed at the time.

2 What is Enter and View?

Local Healthwatch representatives carry out these visits to health and social care services to find out how they are being run and make recommendations where there are areas for improvement. The Health and Social Care Act allows local Healthwatch 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, optometrists 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 we can learn about and share examples of what they do well from the perspective of people who experience the service first hand. Healthwatch 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 safeguarding policies. Healthwatch Swindon has commissioned Swindon Advocacy Movement to recruit four Quality Checkers, and has authorised them to undertake a number of Enter and View visits, with support, specifically from the perspective of people living with a learning disability or on the autistic spectrum.

2.1 Purpose of the Visit

- To find out more about the range of services provided at Sanford House.
- To make practical recommendations about physical aspects of the premises which may have an impact on the experience of users.

2.2 Methodology

This was an announced Enter and View visit and a trial run by the Quality Checkers prior to visits to NHS health and social care premises. We advised the managers of services based at Sanford House when the visit would be undertaken and explained its purpose.

This is what we informed people in writing:

“This is to let you know that we have commissioned Swindon Advocacy Movement to undertake some quality checking work for us. SAM have recruited some volunteers whom we have authorised to undertake a number of visits to health and social care premises during this year. They are going to do a trial run at Sanford House on Friday 29 June where they will be looking at the common parts rather than visiting individual offices.

Formally these are called Enter and View visits. They are not inspections. Healthwatch Swindon is able to carry them out under the terms of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (as amended by the Health and Social Care Act 2012) and National Health Service Act 2006/Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (as amended by the Local Authorities

(Public Health Functions and Entry to Premises by Local Healthwatch Representatives) Regulations 2013.

Generally we undertake these as announced rather than unannounced visits - hence this email. Formally, a draft report is produced after each Enter & View visit. This is checked for any inaccuracies by the service providers concerned prior to publication and circulation. We may produce a report after Friday's visit depending on the findings and any recommendations the volunteers make.

Please make colleagues aware of this visit.”

When the Quality Checkers arrived, the reception team at Sanford House was aware of the visit.



2.3 Results of visit

Outside the building

Disabled parking

There is no dedicated disabled parking for visitors to Sanford House. There is disabled parking on the road and in a nearby carpark but these are for general public use and, therefore, there is no guarantee of spaces being available for visitors.



Sanford Street kerbside

There is disabled parking for Shopmobility users, in what would have been the original carpark for Sanford House, but these spaces are not available for visitors to Sanford House. There are however 3 allocated spaces for Sanford House staff who are Blue Badge holders. The signage was made from paper glued to the wall and one sign was torn and the other was coming away from the wall and very weathered making it impossible to read. The third was no longer on the wall.



Disabled staff parking space

Access to Citizens Advice Bureau is through this carpark and it was confusing whether disabled visitors to CAB could use this carpark. There were some spaces that did not have any signage so there was some confusion as to who could park there.

Building signage

On approaching the building there was no clear signage for Sanford House. There were two main signs which read “Swindon Advice and Support Centre” and it was confusing as to what the proper name was and whether people would understand that the Centre and Sanford House as it is more commonly known as, are one and the same. The only reference was a sign for Sanford Street further along on the building corner, but it wasn’t immediately obvious



Sanford Street signage

There was a small sign on the wall with information on opening hours and services available within Sanford House but it was not in easy read format (times) and it was not clear exactly which organisations were there. However, in Reception on the wall, was another sign listing the actual organisations based at Sanford House, which was found to be more helpful, although it was obscured from public sight.



Signage outside and inside Sanford Street entrance

Access to the building from Sanford Street and from the car park

We observed that the windows and entrance canopy of the building were very dirty and could do with some attention.

From Sanford Street there were signs on the entrance doors explaining how to operate the automatic doors and the opening hours but they were not in easy read format. The doors into Sanford House automatically opened using a push button and were accessible for people in wheelchairs with a ramp leading into Reception.

Once inside, there is lift for wheelchair users to access the upstairs of the building although there are no signs making this clear.



Signage on Sanford Street entrance doors

Access to CAB was found to be confusing. The only signage was at one end of Sanford House and then through a carpark. There were a number of signs on the entry doors but we were unable to read any of them because as we approached the signs, the doors automatically opened against the wall. It was evident however that the signs were not in easy read format. There was an intercom facility but no explanatory notice about how, when and why to use it.



Entrance to Citizens Advice

In the building

Reception

The Reception staff were very courteous and friendly. They explained most visitors have made appointments and they inform the relevant service of their arrival. They also explained that there is a Help Desk and Information Point in the waiting area for visitors with queries and requiring more assistance. However, during our visit, it was noted that this was not explained to all visitors.

It was also noted that there was no private area in Reception where visitors could discuss their personal issues before being signposted to a service.

Visitors do not sign in on arrival or sign out when leaving the building. This raised concerns regarding the health and safety of visitors in the event of an emergency or fire. When we questioned this with Reception, there was confusion over the reply. Part of our group was left with the understanding that visitors are responsible for their own safety and evacuation. This raised further concerns regarding the ability of those with learning difficulties to understand the evacuation procedure and whether they would even recognise an emergency situation if it arose. And some of our group was left with the understanding that whichever service had visitors would be responsible for their safety. This again raised concerns that staff individuals were expected to take on a responsibility that should be left to trained personnel.

However, a member of management we spoke to during our visit had a different understanding of the above. They said that reception staff do make a note of each visitor on arrival and on leaving the building and a fire marshal is responsible for ensuring people's safety.

There was confusion regarding the fire and evacuation procedure notices. Primarily, we weren't sure if the meeting point was out of date as it appeared to be covered up with a black marker and the location of the signs made them difficult to read. Also, the location of one of the green push buttons to exit Reception is sited so close to a fire extinguisher that some thought it was to do with the fire equipment.



Waiting area

The waiting area was clean and tidy. There was a water machine however it was not clear if we could help ourselves so it would have been helpful had Reception explained that on arrival. It was also noted that the machine was running out of water and, as it was very hot on the day of our visit, this was a concern. It was also noted that the drip tray was very grimy with lime scale.



There was plenty of seating and space for people in wheelchairs and those with pushchairs including a play area for children and magazines to read whilst waiting. There were also some seats around tables for small groups to use or for people completing forms. However, there were no seats with supporting arms which some people would find helpful if they have difficulty in getting up. Also there were no wide seats.

There were some computers in the waiting area but it was not immediately clear why and if they were available for visitors to use. On closer view, there was an explanatory notice but nothing in easy read format.



The Help Desk and Information Point was found to be a very helpful facility. A member of staff manning the desk, explained that this was available five days a week and would help people with their enquiries and signpost them to the right service, make appointments, hand out leaflets, help with information on the notice boards and assist people to use the computers.

The sign for the toilets was sited at the opposite end of the waiting area and was difficult to spot and not in easy read format. However the entrance doors for the toilets were in easy read symbols and there was a disabled toilet, as well as male and female toilets each with baby changing facilities.



There was no signage regarding the availability of a lift for disabled visitors and this caused quite a lot of concern. However, a member of staff confirmed that a lift was available if required. It was felt that this information should be clearly displayed in the waiting area.

Notice Boards

There were many areas in Reception with lots of information on display on the walls, as well as leaflet stands. It was described as “walking into a library”. Whilst it was acknowledged that it was important for information to be made available, it was made more difficult for these reasons:

- The individual information sections on the wall were not clearly identified and none was in easy read signage.
- The posters were displayed in an untidy and haphazard manner and it was difficult to navigate through the sheer volume of posters.
- None of the posters were grouped in logical order. For example quizzes, water bills, dementia, pensions etc were all displayed together.
- Each poster was in a different size, colour, type face and layout and therefore it was difficult to read through and understand the information.



One member of management confirmed that they felt the notice boards and information displayed was confusing and not in easy read format. They were not aware of the guidelines of the Accessible Information Standard and therefore had not monitored how information was being displayed by the many organisations who are using Sanford House to publicise their services.

However, the member of management did state that they intended to learn more about the requirements and look at making changes where appropriate.



2.4 Summary findings and recommendations

Building Signage

- A. Signage for the Sanford House building could be improved. The main sign for the building is “Swindon Support and Advice Centre” but this was found to be confusing as the building is commonly referred to as Sanford House. An additional sign for Sanford House in a prominent setting next to the main sign would be helpful.
- B. There should be easy read signage for operating the entrance doors to both Sanford House and CAB and consideration given to where the signage is placed so it is more visible.
- C. There should be easy read signage for opening times for both Sanford House and CAB and consideration given to where the signage is placed so it is more visible.
- D. The Information Point notice outside of the building should be replaced with a larger notice and should be the same as the notice currently placed inside Reception listing the services available in Sanford House. Each service has a logo and it was considered that recognition of the logos would also help those with learning disabilities to identify services.

Parking

- E. Facilities for disabled parking could be improved with provision being made in the Shop Mobility carpark if required. There are currently three spaces allocated for disabled staff working at Sanford House with signage in disrepair which could be improved; and potentially these spaces could also be considered for visitors.

Reception / Waiting Area

- F. Reception staff do not receive any specific training to deal with people with learning difficulties. It was felt that if they did, they would understand more clearly the difficulties encountered and enable them to provide a more considered service. For example, to take extra time to explain the facilities in the waiting area, for example free water, magazines to read whilst waiting, location of toilets, help desk for enquiries or help with leaflets etc. and this would make for a warmer welcome and less anxious visit.
- G. Consideration should be given to a private area so visitors requiring help being signposted to a service do not have to do this in public view and hearing.

- H. Consideration should be given to health and safety issues and whether visitors should sign in and who is responsible for ensuring their safety in the event of an emergency.
- I. Consideration should be given to the location of the fire extinguisher sited closest to the exit green push button on the right of the door to avoid confusion.
- J. The Fire Procedure notice needs to be made clearer with regards to the Meeting Point in the event of an evacuation.
- K. Seating could be further improved with high back chairs with arm supports and wider seating.
- L. The signage on the door through to the meeting rooms and toilets should be in easy read symbols. Also it would be helpful to have a sign in the main waiting area so visitors are aware that toilets are available.
- M. It would be useful for signage in Reception to make it clear that there is a lift available if required.
- N. Consideration should be given to how those with learning difficulties may access the computers in terms of easy read explanatory notices and additional support from the Help Desk.

Notice Boards

- O. Management and Staff should be made aware of the Accessible Information Standard.
 - P. The information on the notice boards could be made more accessible by clearer signage, more easy read posters and better grouping of information.
 - Q. Additionally, as many people with learning disabilities have difficulty in reading, it was felt that each display section should have a prominent easy read notice or poster informing them that a Help Desk is available to assist them if needed.
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2.5 Service Provider Responses

“Well done to everyone involved with this. It was good to see that the visitors found the reception friendly and helpful (though I would have been surprised with anything to the contrary as we all find the reception good).

It is invaluable to get this insight from service users. The report really does make you look at the building from their point of view. Like many things just a few tweaks in service delivery can make a big difference to individuals. There are many points which have straightforward practical solutions and I know some of those, such as signage, are in the process of being changed.

I’m happy with the report as it stands. It would be good for it to go to the tenants group and for us all to work together to see what changes are feasible to be made. It gives us an opportunity to enhance the service at Sanford in a public and tangible way.”

Dawn Dixon
CEO
Swindon Advocacy Movement
37 Regent Street
Swindon
SN1 1JL

“I don’t have any specific comments - other than to echo the suggestion that Healthwatch present the report at the next tenants meeting for discussion and to agree an action plan.”

Richard Hill
Chief Executive Officer
Voluntary Action Swindon
1 John Street
Swindon
SN1 1RT
