

# **Equality information and objectives**

**January 2020**

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## Introduction

The Council takes its duty with regard to equality and diversity very seriously and we believe that we should:

- treat people fairly, justly and with respect in both service provision and employment;
- find ways to support those who are disadvantaged or excluded;
- promote inclusion and celebrate diversity.

We are supported in our commitment to equality through the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) of the Equality Act 2010. The Act brings together all the legal requirements on equality that the private, public and voluntary sectors need to follow and places the following duties on Local Authorities:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment;
- promote equality of opportunity;
- promote good relations between persons of different backgrounds;
- encourage participation in public life for people of different backgrounds.

This report details our objectives and information on issues the people of Walsall and Walsall Council employees face. The information is monitored and updated annually and the objectives reviewed at least every four years.

The Council's ambitions for the Borough are set out in the Corporate Plan 2018 to 2021 (<https://go.walsall.gov.uk/corporate-plan>). This commits us to focussing on the following:

### **Purpose:**

To create an environment that provides opportunities for all individuals and communities to fulfil their potential.

As a local authority, Walsall Council has a statutory duty to deliver specific services within the borough boundaries for all people and communities in Walsall.

### **Vision:**

Reduce inequalities and maximise potential.

We work to ensure that public money is targeted to where it is needed most and used in the most efficient way possible. We are led by the communities we serve; they help shape the services we provide. We help those communities to make a positive difference to their own lives through active civic engagement and co-operation.

### **Values:**

- Professionalism - As stewards of public funds and information, we understand the importance of our jobs. We have respect for ourselves, our colleagues, our citizens and the organisation that we represent. We act accordingly. We deal with issues, positive or negative, in a moderate and straightforward manner, whenever possible;
- Leadership - Together we will create an inspiring vision of the future. We will motivate and inspire people to engage with that vision. We recognise the talents of individuals and allow those talents to be utilised for the betterment of the organisation;

- Accountability - We adhere to a standard of professionalism in the workplace. We hold ourselves responsible for upholding the purpose of our organisation;
- Transparency - We will ensure the availability of information which can be made public;
- Ethical - We will display integrity, honesty and be mindful of the rule of law in order to successfully practice and promote transparency of government.

#### **Priorities:**

- People - have increased independence, improved health and can positively contribute to their communities;
- Economic growth - for all people, communities and businesses;
- Children - have the best possible start and are safe from harm, happy, healthy and learning well;
- Communities - are prospering and resilient with all housing needs met in safe and healthy places that build a strong sense of belonging and cohesion;
- Internal focus - All Council services are efficient and effective;

## **Equality Information**

Our Equality information includes details about the protected characteristics of employees and customers. This evidence has been used to inform policy development and decision-making. It includes both quantitative (numerical) and qualitative (descriptive) information. It means we can

- understand the impact of policies, practices and decisions on people with different protected characteristics, and to plan them more effectively;
- assess whether we are discriminating unlawfully;
- identify what the key equality issues are.

Having identified the main equality information we hold, we are now be able to identify where there are gaps in information and then how to address them.

### **Information on the people of Walsall**

The Walsall Intelligence website, Walsall Insight, is a resource intended to provide a data-driven overview of the Walsall borough. This site provides a range of statistics, info graphics, publications and reports that offers an interesting insight into Walsall.

<https://www.walsallintelligence.org.uk/>

### **Information on Employees of Walsall Council**

Walsall Council's aspiration is to employ a workforce that is representative of the communities we serve. The latest annual employment monitoring report provides a statistical overview of Walsall Council's workforce for the period between 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2019. The latest Employment Monitoring Report is available at

[https://go.walsall.gov.uk/equality\\_documents](https://go.walsall.gov.uk/equality_documents)

### **Recording and Reporting Equality and Diversity Incidents**

As part of our Council-wide commitment to respond to all types of harassment in the workplace, Walsall Council has reporting procedures in place for all forms of discrimination. This enables

- reporting of any incident of discrimination, harassment or victimisation on the basis of a protected characteristic, as defined in the Equality Act 2010;
- those dealing with the recording of any incident involving perceived harassment to act effectively, efficiently, and sensitively.

These procedures support the requirements of the Human Rights Act, as well as the Equality Act 2010, and meet the requirements of the Council's visions and values and community cohesion principles.

### **Equality Protocol**

The Equality Protocol has been developed to set out the aims and objectives of the Council's approach to equality and diversity and the overall commitment to valuing equality, diversity and human rights. It sets out the expectations on our Councillors, managers and employees in the Council's objective to promote equal opportunities for all our customers.

Assessment is carried out and recorded as part of the employee performance management process, as well as with review meetings with managers.

### **Equality and Diversity Related Training**

#### **Equally Yours**

Equally Yours is a board game that can be used from two hours to a whole day. It can be played by every member of staff, from senior management to frontline staff. Questions are customised to Walsall and the Council. Learning objectives will vary depending on your audience and business objectives, but could include:

- a deeper understanding and confidence in managing diversity and inclusion;
- exploring perceptions, thinking and behaviours and the impact on individuals and the organisation;
- better knowledge of legislation, policy and guidance and the impact on decision-making, systems and conduct;
- agreeing on actions that are designed for authentic change.

Equally Yours helps to create honest dialogue, in which we encourage everyone to participate. The honesty often dispels myths. Colleagues will share their experiences in powerful ways. It will also offer people the ability to reflect on themselves and think more carefully about their lens and the impact of how they think and behave.

#### **Training**

Most courses are now completed via E-Learning (<https://walsall.learningpool.com/login/index.php>). However, the Equality team can also provide bespoke Equality and Diversity training for your service. Please ask for details.

### **Information on Services**

Walsall Council believes that, within service delivery, equality is fundamentally about ensuring that customer needs are equally identified and met and by giving exemplary customer service.

## Consultation

Walsall Council endeavours to consult with its residents and business users on major issues or policy changes wherever possible and we use a variety of mechanisms to seek views. At the centre of our approach are four “Localities”, designed to enable services to be much more responsive to local needs and developed through a place-based approach to engaging partners to work collectively to identify local priorities and deliver positive change in their community.

The Council uses a range of approaches and methods to gather feedback, which it uses to inform its decision-making. The approaches used are based on processes appropriate to both the audience and the needs of the council. These commonly include questionnaires, comment forms, online surveys, focus groups, meetings, workshops, online panels, telephone surveys and face-to-face discussions.

Some consultation may be conducted with specific groups of people who are specially invited to take part; other consultation may be on the basis of self-selection where anyone can respond. On occasions, random sample surveys are conducted in order to ensure the views gathered are from a representative sample of the population, providing statistically robust results. The Council itself conducts most consultation. However, sometimes, consultation is conducted by independent research agencies on the Council's behalf. View the Council Consultation information at <https://go.walsall.gov.uk/consultations>

Anyone can have their say on any Council service at any time by using the Council's comments, compliments or complaints procedure 'Tell Us'. <https://go.walsall.gov.uk/tellus>. Statutory complaints and customer feedback process for social care services and Children's services will be forwarded via the 'Tell Us' procedure.

Consultation and engagement will be targeted, representative and inclusive, ensuring that all relevant sections of the community, including those who are seldom heard e.g. younger people, older people, people with disabilities and Minority Ethnic groups, have enough information and are given the chance and support to contribute.

## Walsall Community Cohesion and Integration Strategy 2017-2020 and Walsall for All Programme

This strategy was developed as a result of an extensive cross party consultation exercise, spanning the borough of Walsall. It addresses a wide range of issues, including social attitudes and mixing between different groups of residents as well as representative workforce. Building on this strategy, Walsall Council has become one of the five local authorities invited to take part in the Integration Area Programme of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. A Local Integration Partnership, led by the Council, was set up in October 2018 and our pledged priorities, Walsall for All, were launched in January 2019.

The Walsall For All programme (<https://www.walsallforall.co.uk/>) will build on existing knowledge but will also give Walsall Council an opportunity to learn from local and national projects. As well as focusing on four priorities, below, it will:

- Recognise its strengths as it develops new activities;
- Use its knowledge and experience of community spaces, networks and groups;
- Ensure equal opportunities for all groups and individuals, regardless of their background;

- Support communities and individuals to be engaged, enabled and empowered, as they are the key to achieving our vision;
- Bring partners and people together to advise us and drive our programme forward;
- Learn from others and adapt the programme to ensure it is creating impact.

#### Priority 1 - Connecting Across Communities

The long-term ambition is for Walsall to be a vibrant and diverse place where people come together around what they have in common and form meaningful friendships.

#### Priority 2 - Young People Learning and Growing Together

The long-term ambition is that young people in Walsall have diverse friendships, understanding, and acceptance of all. They have the confidence and aspiration to fulfil their potential and are empowered to take social action and make a positive difference in Walsall.

#### Priority 3 - Working and Contributing Together

The long-term ambition is that everyone has the fair opportunity to contribute to Walsall through meaningful work or volunteering. Everyone should be able to speak English to access these opportunities.

#### Priority 4 - Living Together

The long-term ambition is for well-integrated communities where everyone has good quality housing and plays a positive part in making Walsall a good place to live. Everyone understands their rights and responsibilities – hate crime is reduced, and people of different backgrounds live together in harmony.

### **Equality Impact Analysis**

We have retained Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) as our procedure for carrying out equality analysis: checking the legality of Council decisions in relation to the impact on people with certain characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010. The process allows us to look at evidence and consult as to whether the service or policy is discriminatory (actual or perceived) against people with protected characteristics. The benefit of EqIAs is not simply achieving legal compliance, but a means to best practice and to delivering more effective, appropriate and inclusive policies and practices. Best Practices are examples of outstanding contributions to improving the lives of people in Walsall. They can

- have a demonstrable and tangible impact on improving people's quality of life;
- be the result of effective partnerships between the public, private and civic sectors of society;
- be socially, culturally, economically and environmentally sustainable.

In all EqIAs, details are required to show how it meets the PSED requirements:

- How does the proposal help to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act?
- How does the proposal help to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it?
- How does the proposal help to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it?

EqIAs must be considered for

- all reports with financial or policy decisions that go to Council Cabinet;
- budget setting when there may be an unbalanced effect on certain groups of people, and may be contrary to the statutory equality obligations;
- changes to services, procedures, policies and projects when there may be an unbalanced effect on certain groups of people;
- new services, procedures, policies and projects when there may be an unbalanced effect on certain groups of people.

View the EqlAs list at [https://go.walsall.gov.uk/equality\\_impact\\_assessments-3](https://go.walsall.gov.uk/equality_impact_assessments-3)

## **Other sources of equality information**

### **Walsall Proud Programme**

The Walsall Proud Programme is Walsall Council's transformation programme. It aims to transform the way it works so that it can achieve a better customer experience, increase employee satisfaction and engagement, and improve service efficiency and performance. The Programme will be undertaken across the whole organisation and is closely linked with our medium-term financial strategy.

The Programme's framework consists of nine key themes and eight enablers that will drive the delivery of improvements that will directly support our priorities and increase our sustainability in the face of future demand.

### **Information by Ward**

Ward census profiles are available from the 2011 census. These include Walsall and England and Wales comparators. These are available at [https://go.walsall.gov.uk/2011\\_census-2](https://go.walsall.gov.uk/2011_census-2)

For labour market information, there are some profiles available via nomis at <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/ward2011/1946157191/report.aspx>.

## Equality Objectives

Our Equality Objectives are based on available equalities information through research, consultation and engagement and Equality Impact Assessments (EqIA's). They help identify internal and external targets that enable the Council to improve the collection of equality information and address the most persistent areas of inequalities faced by both employees and customers.

### **Objective 1**

**We will promote inclusion and commit to understanding the individual experience throughout our work**

### **Objective 2**

**We will engage and empower local communities to resolve equality issues**

### **Objective 3**

**We will strive to have a diverse workforce at all levels**

### **Objective 4**

**We will treat people and agencies that we work with, fairly, justly and with respect, by being open, inclusive and collaborative**

### **Objective 5**

**We will find ways to support those who are disadvantaged or excluded**

Each Council Directorate has provided a report that summarises how it has considered equality and diversity and has made a difference to employees and customers.

## Walsall Council Equality and Diversity Information

### Directorate Report

### December 2019

<b>Directorate</b>	<b>Adult Social Care</b>
<b>Executive Director</b>	<b>Paula Furnival</b>
<b>Contact officer</b>	<b>Jeanette Knapper</b>
<b>E-mail</b>	<b>Jeanette.knapper@walsall.gov.uk</b>

### Corporate Equality Objectives

Our equality objectives are based on available equalities information through research, consultation, engagement, and Equality Impact Assessments. They help identify internal and external targets that will enable the Council to improve the collection of equality information, and address the most persistent areas of inequalities faced by both employees and customers:

We will:-

- Promote inclusion and commit to understanding the individual experience throughout our work;
- Engage and empower local communities to resolve equality issues;
- Strive to have a diverse workforce at all levels;
- Treat people and agencies that we work with, fairly, justly and with respect, by being open, inclusive and collaborative;
- Find ways to support those who are disadvantaged or excluded.

### Equality Act 2010 Protected Characteristics

Protected characteristics are the grounds upon which discrimination is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010;

Age	Race
Disability	Religion and belief
Gender reassignment	Sex
Marriage and civil partnership	Sexual orientation
Pregnancy and maternity	

## Part 1 Main strategies and plans containing equality and diversity information

Title	Purpose	Availability	
		On request	Internet address
Workforce Strategy	To ensure there is an overarching strategy that identifies the workforce across Adult social care and its needs in relation to workforce development, and learning	✓	<a href="https://go.walsall.gov.uk/Portals/0/Uploads/Jobs/corporate_workforce_strategy_2017-2020_proof_3_summary.pdf">https://go.walsall.gov.uk/Portals/0/Uploads/Jobs/corporate_workforce_strategy_2017-2020_proof_3_summary.pdf</a>
Corporate plan	The Corporate Plan sets out the Council's purpose along with the priorities that we believe will help to reduce inequalities and maximise potential. The timeframe for this plan aligns to the Council's four-year budget plan, which moves the Council through to 2021. It recognises the financial constraints within which we operate, but is ambitious for the Borough and its people.	✓	<a href="https://go.walsall.gov.uk/corporate-plan">https://go.walsall.gov.uk/corporate-plan</a>
Directorate Plan	To ensure that the Directorate sign up to and deliver the actions agreed as part of their day to day business, that also feeds from and back into the Corporate Plan	✓	<a href="https://go.walsall.gov.uk/social_care-2">https://go.walsall.gov.uk/social_care-2</a>
All HR policies and Procedures	To ensure that any procedures that have to be initiated by adult Social care, is done so, via the approved procedures and policies of the wider Council	✓	<a href="https://link.walsall.gov.uk/Traded-Services/Business-Support/Human-Resources">https://link.walsall.gov.uk/Traded-Services/Business-Support/Human-Resources</a>
Learning and Development opportunities that also engage	Examples of the raised awareness training opportunities include: Human Trafficking and slavery	✓	

staff as well as encourage raised awareness of equality issues	Unconscious Bias: Service and training plans linked rough to the Learning and Development actions: Information Governance		
Regulated and unregulated Closure Guidance	To help teams to plan and collaborate working process and actions in prepare for the closure of a regulated or an unregulated home or service across Social care	✓	
Direct Payments Policy and Guidance	Ensures that every customer who could be offered a Direct payment in lieu of services is actually supported to receive them	✓	<a href="https://go.walsall.gov.uk/direct-payments">https://go.walsall.gov.uk/direct payments</a>

## Part 2 Equality Impact Assessments November 2018 to October 2019

Service	Title	Contact officer name
Adult Social Care Commissioning	Residential and Nursing Care Services for Older People and Complex Care	Tracy Simcox
Adult Social Care Commissioning	Residential and Nursing Block Contract	Jean Watson
Service wide	Direct Payments	Ian Staples/Jennie Pugh

## Part 3 Equality and Diversity Objectives

### 1. We will promote inclusion and commit to understanding the individual experience throughout our work

In Adult Social Care (ASC) we encourage, at all times, the opportunities for local people to access local community resource. Within the Directorate, there exists a range of staff that allows the Service to signpost individuals' to ordinary resource that not only improves community inclusion but also promotes independence and less risk of isolation.

Some people receive information and signposting to third sector providers who will help a person to regain confidence as well as find opportunities to retain activities of interest.

"Making Connections" is a provider resource that visits people at home in order to help build confidence, try to encourage friendships and also spends time with the person and try to reduce the risk of isolation. ASC refers many people into this service following a statutory assessment or after a person has had a period of debility. Making connections 'does what it says on the tin' and helps people to reconnect or find ways that they can become familiar again with people, situations and past hobbies, when perhaps they have lost skills, confidence or the will to engage following illness, debility or bereavement.

Within the Access team, there are also Neighbourhood Officers. The aim of these roles is to support individuals to receive information, signposting and advice and where possible ensure that as much can be shared in order to help the person remain at home and as independently inclusive of the local community as possible. Officers tend to link in with customers who require a little more than just a point of contact via the telephone.

ASC also support the work of Social Prescribers across locality teams. These roles work with adults who have received assessment and packages of care, who then, through the social prescribing routes, can also maximise their independence by encouraging the take up of services within the community. In addition, Social Prescribers are linked to GPs surgeries and, therefore, help to maximise improved health and wellbeing. Several people with a range of disabilities have been supported in a time-limited way in recent months, by being referred into with a newly trained team that can support people into increased independence.

The work of the team is to encourage people to take part in community based activities, learn how to find their way around local areas and to work with the customer and their family where possible, to become resilient and feel they are more in control of their lives by being able to make choices.

More recently, the opportunity for the Children and Adult Directorates to work closer together also means that "think family" and local offers become seamless and accessible, as we are able to remove the artificial barriers that sometimes have in the way across Departments and services.

## **2. We will engage and empower local communities to resolve equality issues**

ASC as a Directorate is working far more closely with local communities as they begin their journey to deliver a place-based model of care and support. Walsall Together is a new strategic Partnership that focuses on bringing together Health and Social Care and ensures that local working arrangements also support the wider needs of the communities.

ASC has representatives on the Equality and Cohesion group and represents itself as visible partners when working with One Walsall. One Walsall is the voice of the voluntary sector in Walsall. As a result, it will often help communities and local people to understand what is available to them locally and to signpost as part of our duties under the Care Act.

A key element of this work is that it will enable them to become far more self-sustaining and in control of their lives, as well as offering Information advice and guidance, thus maximising a person's ability to remain unique and valued as a member of the local community they live.

Health Watch, an independent national champion for people who use health and social care services, is commissioned by ASC and, as part of their end of year review, visits any issues relating to inequalities. There are case studies of work, which are available upon request, which demonstrate our commitment and compliance of the Statutory assessment and which promotes cultural needs for individuals when considering the longer-term support for a person.

Some of the key support mechanisms include anything from how a person still wishes to be supported at home, right through to trying to find local culturally sensitive outcomes from people who may have lost their ability to find their own solutions to maintain connectivity with local community life.

Promotion of employment opportunities for people, regardless of their complexity of need, means that, as a partner, ASC encourages people to prepare for employment using IMPACT and European Social Funding routes to enable that to happen.

ASC is actively working to promote a resilient communities agenda as part of the work being-led by PROUD. ASC will continue to be a pro-active lead member of this work stream and, wherever possible, continue to promote the value that a resilient community can bring.

### 3. We will strive to have a diverse workforce at all levels

A representative workforce, (Walsall Council and Adults Services statistics based on Employment Monitoring Report 2018 – 2019 compared to previous annual reporting as at March each year). The demographics of the population in Walsall are as follows;

	<b>Census 2011 Walsall Working Age Residents (age 16-74)</b>	<b>Walsall Council March 2019</b>	<b>Adult Social Care March 2019</b>
<b>Male/Female split</b>	49.1% Male 50.9% Female	31.49% Male 68.51% Female	17.40% Male 82.60% Female
<b>Minority Ethnic</b>	23%	21.59%	30.11%
<b>Disabilities</b>	10.4% (different definition)	4.39%	8.01%

The number of people working for Walsall Council has reduced year on year since 2011/12, resulting in a total workforce of 3,141, as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019. ASC headcount has reduced from 449 last year to 362 this year. Detailed below are some points for consideration regarding the profile of the workforce:

#### Gender

The percentage of female workers in ASC at 82.60% is a marginal decrease on last year (83.52%), but in common with Children's Services remains consistently higher than other Directorates. As a result, male workers are underrepresented (17.40%), although this is a marginal increase on last year (16.48%).

In ASC, the percentage split of all males classed as part time workers (1.38%) and female workers (18.23%) shows virtually no change in part-time working for males, but a significant reduction in part-time working for females. However, the latter is more accurately described as a significant reduction in the female, part-time workforce, notably through the closure of Hollybank, which was a predominantly female, part-time workforce.

#### Gender Pay

The percentage split of female workers to male workers in each grade band in ASC shows some significant change in comparison to the same period 12 months ago, fluctuating as follows;

##### Percentage of female workers by Grade

- Grade G5 and below – 81.03% a decrease from 88.65% last year;
- Grade G6-G9 – 84.30% an increase from 80.00% last year;
- Grade 10-13 – 81.25% an increase from 76.47% last year;
- Grade 14 and above – 80.00% a slight decrease from 85.56% last year.

Overall, these are positive moves showing an increase of female staff in higher paid roles. However, some of the detail behind the changes is important to note:

- The reduction of females below Grade 5 is in line with the significant reduction in the female workforce at this level, not a shift to higher pay or movement to higher paid roles;
- The significant percentage increase at Grade 14 and above represents a small numerical shift (from five males, four females to eight females, two males).

### Minority Ethnic

In ASC, the percentage of minority ethnic workers has increased from 20.49% last year to 30.11% in 2018/19. This is a significant increase and the Directorate's minority ethnic workforce percentage is higher in comparison to any other Directorate, Walsall Council overall (21.59%) and the Walsall community (23%). At March 2019, 3.87% of workers in ASC have not stated or chosen not to state their ethnic group, which is a reduction of non-declared ethnicity compared to last year (6.90%).

The increase in minority ethnic workers in grade is particularly marked at the Grade 10-13 range. While there has been an increase of about 4 to 5 percentage points in minority ethnic workers up to Grade 9, the increase in the Grade 10 to 13 range between 2017/18 and 2018/19 has been from 19.61% to 39.06%. This is partially explained by an increased headcount from 51 to 64 in this banding. While this will be mostly through filling existing vacancies rather than new posts, it remains that minority ethnic workers have filled the majority of vacancies at this level.

### Disability

The percentage of workers within ASC declaring a disability is 8.01% a slight increase from 6.90% last year. The percentage split of workers with a disability in different pay bands in comparison to last year is as follows:

#### Percentage of disabled workers by Grade

- Grade G5 and below – 5.17%, a slight decrease from 5.68% last year;
- Grade G6-G9 – 11.05%, an increase from 9.38% last year;
- Grade 10-13 – 6.25%, an increase from 5.88% last year;
- Grade 14 and above – 0.00%, no change.

The concentration of disabled workers is in the Grades 6 – 9 band. However, it should be noted that, as the base numbers are small, minor changes significantly affect the pattern, for example the total increase across all grades is 5 employees.

### Age

The 2011 census shows that 16-24 year olds make up the largest group in the local population at 11.7%. However, it would not be expected that the Directorate workforce could reflect this given the general requirement for a professionally qualified and experienced workforce, and a pattern of long service. In ASC, the percentage of the workforce under 25 years of age is only 2.21%, slightly lower than the Council overall. However, this is a slight increase on 2017/2018, which was 1.34%. The largest age group in the ASC workforce, in line with other Directorates

and the Council as a whole, is the 50-54 year old group, at 17.54%. Overall, over 50% of the ASC workforce are over 45.

#### Religion and Sexual Orientation

There continues to be some reluctance from employees to disclose their religion and/or sexual orientation. 51.66% of staff within ASC have stated their religion, 3.04% prefer not to say and 45.30% not stated. In terms of sexual orientation, 42.26% of staff have not chosen their orientation, which is an improvement, a decrease from 59.02% not declared last year.

We follow all of the relevant Policies and procedures in place in order to promote the individual and collective needs of the workforce. We recruit individuals who have the necessary skills, knowledge and ability to undertake the roles for which they are applying. Through support and supervision alongside the persons APC, there are several opportunities to promote personal professional development at all levels within ASC.

There have been care conferences introduced across ASC in the last year and internal stakeholders have attended these events, alongside Staff briefings, thus feeling engaged and valued a part of changing processes and agendas.

Staff engage in all training open to them that is relevant to their work and needs of the service model. As part of the workforce development strategy for Adult Social care, there is a working group that are considering the wider and longer term needs of the workforce. Staff are supported to maximise their opportunities to remain at work and there are reasonable adjustments made to any person who may be debilitated through illness or disability.

ASC is also pro- active and inclusive of the opportunities open to the Directorate when supporting individuals to become an apprentice, or to support an apprentice into the working environment. ASC promotes use of apprentices. One example of the successful application of this process for taking on apprentices into the workplace was a young person with Asperger's. He is employed into the wider Council. It is important to understand that a person with needs around disability or mental health may also require ongoing support to remain in employment post apprenticeship. If this is not available, then there is a risk of setting people up to fail.

The Directorate Plan continues to promote the inclusion of supporting a resilient and well-trained workforce. The plan supports the need for the workforce strategy and currently there is work on going to ensure that the promotion of ongoing learning and development is in place across the whole of the Directorate. Apprenticeships are encouraged at all levels, as are opportunities to engage in local regional and national agendas and learning events.

ASC is working to improve the percentage of people with a learning disability in receipt of social care services that are also in paid employment. One initiative is to support people in paid employment in the Provider resource for four weeks, as part of an introduction to work. Following this, they can remain as part of a pool of the Council's casual employees and so can be selected, where possible, to contribute to the Directorate's work.

For example, when the Council are consulting on change that affects people with complex needs and disabilities, when attempting to engage and co design new things, or when there is real opportunities to add value to the Council's work, from the shoes walked of a person with a disability.

#### **4. We will treat people and agencies that we work with, fairly, justly and with respect, by being open, inclusive and collaborative**

Through the statutory assessment process, workers employed within the ASC Directorate spend a great deal of their time meeting with and speaking to local citizens who, at times, may be calling on the assistance of its services. Employees work hard to try to relate to the person that they are attempting to support and are expected at all times to present to people in an open honest and respectful way.

It is acknowledged that, from time to time, vulnerable people require a far more bespoke way of being supported, even from the first point of contact. Timely and proportionate support is sought from agencies and partners in order to maximise a person's potential to succeed.

Some of the key agencies that ASC work with regularly include internal partnerships and Directorates, the Police, the Fire Service, Health, Housing, Leisure and host employers/businesses.

Walsall Together is the Overarching Strategic partnership that ASC along with other key partners are evolving. Shared ownership of key agendas and work across the key stakeholder group for employment is proving effective when planning the locality-based models of working.

ASC recently engaged with a local coalition group, relating to the special educational needs and disability (SEND) agenda and recent Ofsted improvement action plan. What we wanted to do was ensure that the group of parents were aware of the work ongoing to develop and all age Disability Model across Children and ASC directorate. As part of that, we also wanted the Coalition group to help to consider how young people with disabilities, could help to co design a space within the new Hub, to the taste and needs of the potential end user group.

Engagement, in order to improve the environment, was also promoted in recent months across ASC provider resource. In order to add social value to the work we were about to undertake, we requested the support of the Black Country partnership for Probation services. Over four months, the provider and the Probation service supported 100 community volunteers to paint a whole building. Their time was in relation to their pay back to community and the engagement beforehand was with end users who spent time with staff choosing colour schemes. Together this was a great success and is now forming the base for the new All Age Disability hub.

Assessment and care management recognise the need to organise themselves differently and to support people in a way that is strength based and not continue to support people via a deficit model.

We are working to promote a positive image with the individual, helping them to see their strengths and live by those strengths, only then calling on ASC to support with things they need from us-celebrating positive outcomes and not focussing all of the time on providing services.

ASC is currently working with the Corporate Communications team to plan a Strength based case study DVD entitled “day in the life of” for the purpose of showcasing real case examples of customer journey and their local experiences along the way to independence and inclusion.

There was a recent National “Our Day” Twitter event organised by the Local Government Association (LGA). ASC took part in that and captured several quotes as follows :-

ASC intro	Adult Social Care teams in Walsall support peoples aspirations, not just their needs, by sourcing local solutions and focusing on what people can do and not on what they can't #OurDay
Walsall Together	The 'Walsall Together Partnership' has been created to improve the overall offer to residents across Health and Social care, Police, Housing, Public Health, Community based partners and providers #OurDay
Locality Teams	Because our Adult Social Care teams are based locally, we can work in partnership with the community – providing local solutions for local people, in a creative and resourceful way #OurDay
Perform Plus: Huddle	Social care teams share best practice and explore solutions by having daily huddle meetings as part of 'Perform Plus' – helping to improve our performance and outcomes #OurDay
Social Prescribers	Social Prescribers are an amazing asset for locally based social care teams; they have an in depth knowledge about solutions and activities available within the local community, helping people to live more independently for longer and reducing loneliness and isolation #OurDay
AAD Hub Launch	Exciting times ahead - Adult Social Care will shortly be launching an All Age Disability Hub #OurDay
Probation service	100 skilled tradespeople from the Black Country Probation Service got together recently, to redecorate the All Age Disability Provider Hub, a tired building was given a fresh look and the volunteers were able to contribute to their local community #OurDay
Outreach team	“Earlier this year it was arranged for my daughter to learn new skills, like how to cross the road safely and to use buses to move around. The results are amazing and I do thank everyone in the Outreach team for their efforts.” Father (aged 91) #OurDay
Outreach team	“All Age Disability is creating new opportunities to prepare for employment, education and ordinary life. I've received social care for nearly 14 years. Now I realise I just needed some support to make my own choices and be given some ways of developing my skills ” #OurDay
SEN	We work with employers and individuals to create openings for work placements and real work place experience, paid or none paid, promoting the offers for young people who have Special Educational Needs #OurDay
Shared Lives	Outreach Shared lives and building based offers all compliment the work we are achieving to maximise independence for people of all age with a wide range of disabilities, autism and Mental Health #OurDay

Commissioners are actively engaging with the external marketplace by way of strengthening local relationships and harnessing and sharing good practice, thus strengthening and improving the quality of the care and support that people are commissioning and receiving locally.

A pilot is currently set up and being run within the ASC Directorate that is focussing on improving the care and quality of commissioning support across Walsall. By delivering this, it is anticipated that there will be a standardised offer across all provider agencies, which will help commissioners, providers and customers to feel confident in the offers that they can expect to receive. The team can also help to engage more widely with partners and immediate providers by way of raising the common awareness and needs for continued improvements, transparency and proportionality across the sectors.

When things do go wrong across the care markets, there is also a process that the ASC Directorate and its partners go through in order for everyone to remain safe, well and wherever possible, continue to be cared for and supported with least disruption. There are guidelines in place, which enables a system of smart working, fairness and transparency in all that we do, alongside partners. This reduces risks of unnecessary change, thus helping the local people of Walsall to continue to receive the right support at the right time across a marketplace that is thriving and able to adapt to needs of the community in a timely and proportionate way, even when things do at times go wrong.

#### A person's story

This person's story highlights some of the excellent relationships that have been building because of delivering an All Age Disability approach at Goscote Centre, when supporting the needs of vulnerable people with Disabilities, Autism and Mental health.

The recent creation of a time limited outreach model as part of the offer across the in house provider resource has meant that the person has been able to be supported back to good health and wellbeing following a referral from the safeguarding team.



Service user G is a 59 -year-old woman with a range of needs linked to her mild Learning Disability through an acquired head injury. G lives within a Sheltered Housing scheme within the Borough of Walsall. G also received a package of care and support in 2017 costing £3500 prior to this ceasing due to her brother and sister in law taking on the care needs of G.

A safeguarding issue was raised, as her brother had passed away and his wife was not fulfilling her carer duties and G began to self-neglect .A multi- disciplinary team shared concerns about G. She had lost weight, was unkempt, showing signs of neglect, isolation and loss of confidence and skills. Her home was disorganised and dirty.

A second brother and sister in law became main carers, but although they took on shopping tasks, they were not able to continue to offer the level of support that G required. The risks of admission to 24-hour care were sensitively discussed with everyone.

Referral was then made to the Outreach service at Goscote. The team worked with G for 5 months, in order to re build confidence, support her to travel independently, shop unassisted and regain skills to promote independence. This was inclusive of preparing food from scratch, maintaining a clean and safe home, paying bills, using the bank, enjoying her own company as well as exploring many, opportunities across the Borough in terms of full community inclusion.

As G gained more confidence, the staff have worked with her to access voluntary work at a local shop, close to her family. The next steps now are to explore paid employment for G.

The time-limited support has now ended at Goscote. The difference in confidence, health and wellbeing in G is absolutely inspirational and marked.

G now has a very active social circle within the community and the church network of support cannot believe the difference that these little, but fundamental steps have made to G as a person and to her life overall, medical health is now good, there are no concerns around G. She is able to connect across the widest stretches of the Walsall footprint and is doing this fully independently.

Now that G has been supported to travel around Walsall with more confidence, she has newfound confidence to speak to people and ask directions, go to the local bus station and find the buses and local connections needed to get her to different and new places unsupervised. G visits her father, who lives the other part of town and although it is quite a way to walk, G chooses to do this for exercise rather than getting on the bus.

G has also made new friends following the support from the Outreach and she is using the community café based at Goscote, again all part of choice and independence, something that had never been possible or even encouraged in the past. Family are very happy with the transformation in their sister/in law.

It has also been a positive journey, especially from the Statutory assessors and supporting health colleagues. In endorsing the whole approach and following intervention, this person's current presenting need means that there is no longer a need to explore a funded package of care and support. There is contentment with the outcomes that G has achieved in a very short time.

The service and approach at the Goscote hub has supported a joined up and inclusive approach to supporting vulnerable people, whilst recognising that longer term, people do need to have opportunities to maximise their independence and be supported to do that proportionately. The model helps to stem the flow of over prescribed support and longer-term reliance on health and social care services.

The approach is being delivered to anyone currently over the age of 14, a proactive approach to help promote ordinary life opportunities wherever possible, regardless of the level of complexity. It is also used to support people as part of step down from acute settings as well as trying to prevent the needs to step up where at all possible.

## **5. We will find ways to support those who are disadvantaged or excluded**

A specific question posed to potential providers recently was in regards to how organisations will use innovative approaches to gather and capture views and experiences of health and social care services and how they are promoting accessible use by seldom heard of communities i.e. individuals with learning disabilities, limited fluctuation capacity, ethnic minority groups. Organisations were requested to provide examples of past experience, outcomes and impacts of how successful they have been previously in gathering and engaging with seldom-heard groups.

Where there are also known third sector groups that can support people that are harder to engage, particularly when there is also a risk of social isolation, those providers may be called upon to support the statutory assessor. This will be achieved by visiting a person at home by way of early introduction, in the hope that this will develop a person's confidence and the opportunities available to them to remain actively involved in community life. This may also be undertaken with harder to engage groups of people, where the service is often used to support individually assessed needs of people.

The ASC and Children's directorates have worked to encourage closer working relationships over the past year. There is a new all age disability approach across both directorates, which is aimed at improving the preparation for adulthood agendas, through maximising the opportunities of a seamlessness of approach, collaboration and timely outcomes for people at key stages of their lives.

# Walsall Council Equality and Diversity Information

## Directorate Report

### December 2019

<b>Directorate</b>	<b>Children's Services</b>
<b>Executive Director</b>	<b>Sally Rowe</b>
<b>Contact officer</b>	<b>Carol Boughton</b>
<b>E-mail</b>	<b><u><a href="mailto:Carol.Boughton@walsall.gov.uk">Carol.Boughton@walsall.gov.uk</a></u></b>

#### Corporate Equality Objectives

Our equality objectives are based on available equalities information through research, consultation, engagement, and Equality Impact Assessments. They help identify internal and external targets that will enable the Council to improve the collection of equality information, and address the most persistent areas of inequalities faced by both employees and customers:

We will:-

- Promote inclusion and commit to understanding the individual experience throughout our work;
- Engage and empower local communities to resolve equality issues;
- Strive to have a diverse workforce at all levels;
- Treat people and agencies that we work with, fairly, justly and with respect, by being open, inclusive and collaborative;
- Find ways to support those who are disadvantaged or excluded.

#### Equality Act 2010 Protected Characteristics

Protected characteristics are the grounds upon which discrimination is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010;

Age	Race
Disability	Religion and belief
Gender reassignment	Sex
Marriage and civil partnership	Sexual orientation
Pregnancy and maternity	

## Part 1 Main strategies and plans containing equality and diversity information

Title	Purpose	Availability	
		On request	Internet address
The Corporate Strategy	Key strategic plan for Walsall Borough Council		<a href="https://go.walsall.gov.uk/corporate-plan">https://go.walsall.gov.uk/corporate-plan</a>
The Walsall Plan: Our Health and Wellbeing Strategy	Key Strategic plan for health priorities		<a href="https://go.walsall.gov.uk/Portals/0/Uploads/PublicHealth/60112%20Walsall%20Our%20Health%20and%20Wellbeing%20Strategy%202017-2020.pdf">https://go.walsall.gov.uk/Portals/0/Uploads/PublicHealth/60112%20Walsall%20Our%20Health%20and%20Wellbeing%20Strategy%202017-2020.pdf</a>
Complaints (corporate and statutory)	Information regarding the complaints process is available electronically and in hard copy and different formats for children and young people. The team offer support to all complainants, including adapting the format of information to meet requirements and drafting complaints on behalf of the customer		<a href="https://go.walsall.gov.uk/tellus">https://go.walsall.gov.uk/tellus</a>
Workforce Strategy	Our ambition is to ensure that Walsall children are safe and that we are intervening with the child, in the right place, at the right time for the right length of time. This means taking every opportunity to invest in and grow colleagues and partners so that we can work better together to make sure children and young people living, learning and growing up in Walsall are safe, happy, healthy and with a bright future. To contribute towards this vision, children's services recognises the importance of having a skilled workforce who work together to deliver better outcomes. Workforce development is the key to ensuring we	✓	<a href="https://go.walsall.gov.uk/Portals/0/Uploads/Jobs/corporate_workforce_strategy_2017-2020_proof_3_summary.pdf">https://go.walsall.gov.uk/Portals/0/Uploads/Jobs/corporate_workforce_strategy_2017-2020_proof_3_summary.pdf</a>

	continue to understand and meet our employees learning and development needs.		
Children's Services Supervision Policy	This document describes Children's Services commitment to providing quality supervision and support to children's services social work staff, team Managers, Early Help Practitioners and other professionals working with children and families in Walsall.	✓	
Corporate Parenting Strategy	This strategy outlines our vision for all looked after children and care leavers in Walsall. As Corporate Parents, we want all our children and young people to have every opportunity that good parents want for their children. Above all we want our children to fulfil the goals and ambitions they set for themselves and ultimately provide good parenting for their own children	✓	
Virtual School Development Plan	This Plan outlines our ambitions for the education outcomes for looked after children	✓	
Early Help Strategy	This strategy identifies our partnership approach to delivering effective Early Help. The delivery of the right help, in the right way as early as possible to tackle problems and prevent issues from escalating is essential to improving the life chances of Walsall's children, young people and their families. It will build capacity in communities that will prevent crime, support education and enterprise, keep children, young people and their families healthy and safe and reduce the demand for statutory services.	✓	
Walsall Youth Justice Service	This plan sets out how the Walsall Youth Justice Service partnership will work effectively to prevent children and young people entering	✓	

	the Youth Justice System, to continue to reduce reoffending and support families, victims and the wider community within its statutory framework particularly the requirements within the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.		
Walsall Right for Children Inclusion Strategy	The Strategy sets out the vision and priorities to ensure a step change in improved educational outcomes for all children	✓	
School Causing Concern Protocol	This protocol outlines the procedures for school settings in relation to monitoring, challenge, support and intervention	✓	
Walsall SEND Written Statement of Action	Our action plan, co-produced with parents, which lays out, our direction of travel to deliver improved outcomes for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)	✓	
Children's Services Right 4 Children Newsletter (WR4C)	Regular newsletter to Children's Services workforce highlighting local, regional and national resources to protect and support vulnerable children and their families. Celebrates local good news and successes	✓	
Education Weekly Update	Weekly newsletter to all schools highlighting local, regional and national developments and resources to improve progress and attainment including resources to engage and protect vulnerable children. Celebrates local good news and successes.	✓	

## Part 2 Equality Impact Assessments November 2018 to October 2019

Service	Title	Contact officer name
Directorate wide	New Safeguarding Partnership Arrangements	Carol Boughton

## Part 3 Equality and Diversity Objectives

### 1. We will promote inclusion and commit to understanding the individual experience throughout our work

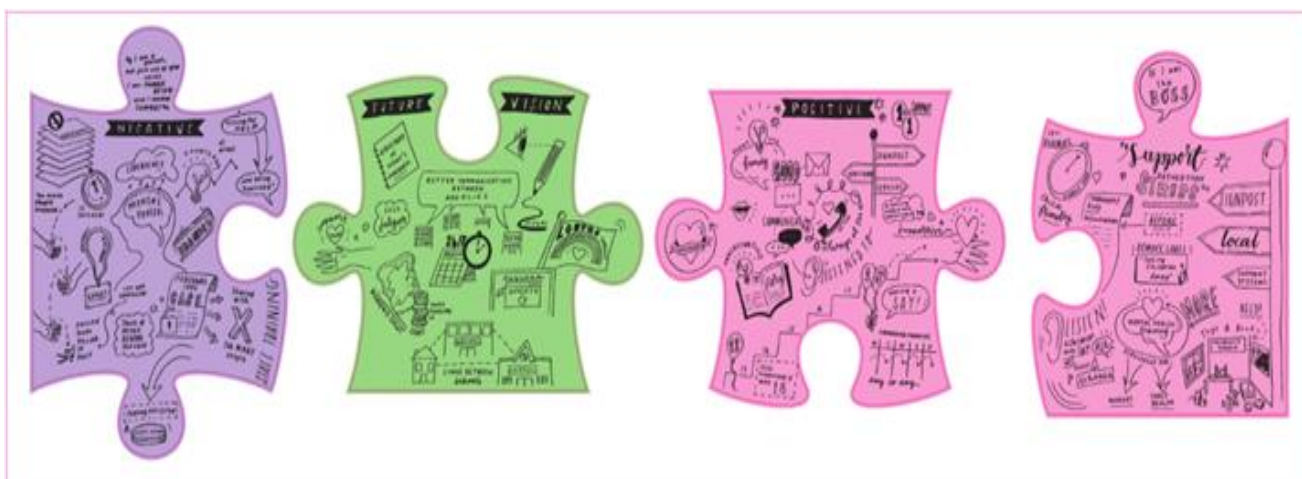
Fundamental to our work in understanding individual experiences has been our Big Conversation. Commencing in February 2019, this has been a programme of consultation, engagement and collaboration with children, young people and families carried out as part of our 'Walsall Right 4 Children' (WR4C) Transformation programme.

As part of the first phase of the programme, we asked all practitioners to have two conversations with children and a further two conversations with parents. This was designed to explore what their current experience is of services delivered by Children's Services and to establish what changes they feel we need to consider as part of our new way of working.

Over an eight-week period, practitioners across Children's Services facilitated 143 individual conversations with children, young people and parents. The lead for transformation facilitated six focus groups – one with young people who had experience of being in care and five with parents/carers who had experienced a range of interventions from early help to Child Protection to children being taken into care. A specific focus group was also undertaken with fathers.

To ensure that the collective voices from children, young people and their families was being heard and is impacting on our practice and transformation programme we have opted to create a number of tools to capture the themes from the conversations:

We have created four puzzle pieces –visualising the things they said we were already doing well, the things we could improve upon and their vision for our future WR4C Journey. The last puzzle piece represents the things children and their families would change if they were the boss of children services:



We have also created an “If I was the boss” poster (see attached) detailing what children and their families have said they would do if they were the boss of children's services. The feedback has been captured into 4 themes:

- Things they would do around communications;
- Things they would do around relationships;

- Things they would do about the people providing help;
- Things they would do about the type of help.

These reflection tools have been issued to all staff with the puzzle pieces acting as a visual reminder to all staff about what children and their families have told us.

In September we began the process of collating our evidence in respect of actions taken within each Service as a result of the Big Conversation and the impact this has made.

#### Feedback from early help:

- Early help teams have focussed a lot around changing the language to reflect the top tips and the feedback received. This includes a redesign of feedback questionnaires and locality activity leaflet;
- Staff have also reflected on the ID badges and are more mindful about showing them in a sensitive way rather than wearing them;
- Early Help have started to support Children, young people and families to chair their own early help meetings;
- Early help teams are reviewing their offer to ensure it is meeting their needs and can effectively engage young people.

As a result of these changes the teams felt they are

- Better at engaging with children, young people and families and having more open conversations;
- Able to share more evidence around positive feedback from parents and positive impact on children in unit meetings;
- Identifying training needs in feeling confident to engage and meet need needs.

#### Feedback from our front door teams, Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and Early Help:

- The teams have focused on changing the language they use and have further developed their direct working tools to enable conversations about wishes and feelings to take place in different ways;
- Assessments will be undertaken over a number of visits to ensure they can develop a better relationship. These teams have reflected that they are involved in the life of a child for a very short period of time so they need to think about creating the right conditions rather than just the outcome and the plan a child might need;
- Workers will have time to read any previous file or information before they go out to see a child so that they know and understand the child's history and they do not have to repeat themselves. The teams have continued to focus on strengthening their restorative working skills so they can focus on the strengths for a family as well as talking to a child about our concerns for them. They hope this will help families feel listened to and that they will be able to contribute in a major way to finding their own solutions. This is balanced by being honest and clear about our concerns so that families can also take ownership and contribute to a different story for their family as they move forward;
- Staff do not arrive wearing their ID badges, but will always carry them to show a child and family so they can check their ID.

Feedback from Safeguarding and Family Support teams:

- There is a real focus on building better relationships with families, communities and each other;
- There have been some challenging discussions that have taken place around providing support to families and not practising in punitive ways.

Feedback from Safeguarding and Review Service:

- The team has reflected on how they hear the child's voice in their looked after reviews and at child protection conferences to ensure that this is always kept in mind;
- There have been discussions with colleagues from other services work in relation to challenges and possible solutions in achieving this. A working group has been established to take this work forward;
- Changes have been made to the waiting area to facilitate a better environment.

Work on ensuring that the voice of the children with whom we work features across this feedback. It reflects what children have told us about the importance of workers listening to them and, as a result, explaining, clearly and concisely, what had happened and why.

Children told us that they want workers to:

- ...listen well and...be respectful to the child;
- Explain to children the reason they came into care;
- If I ask you something get back to me. I know you're busy but this is my life, just send me a text;
- Make sure everyone communicates and gets the big picture;
- Make sure all staff listen to the child to get their point of view;
- Be told when you are leaving.

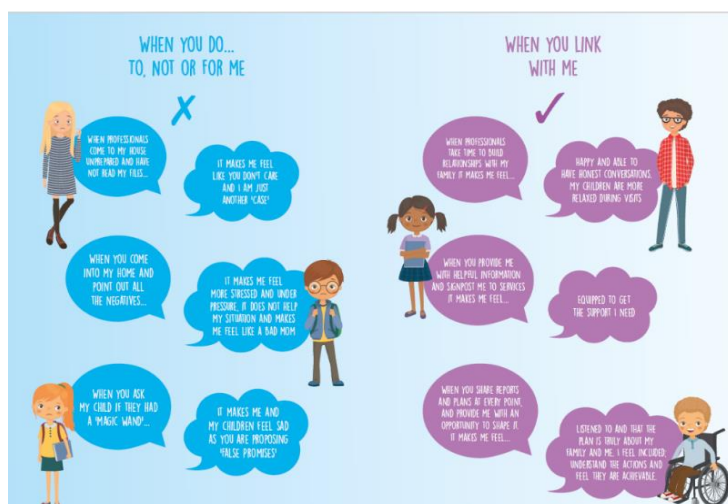
There is the clear expectation that the voice of the child is captured, recorded, and, where possible, acted upon. This includes providing an explanation when what the child wants is not possible.

Through our work we seek to find ways to support those who are disadvantaged or excluded (see Section 5, page 39)

## **2. We will engage and empower local communities to resolve equality issues**

We have established a WR4C parent group to work with us as we embed the lessons learnt as part of our ongoing Big Conversation.

They have developed a 'top tips' tool to support practitioners to communicate better with children and families. This tool is distributed to all practitioners in MASH, Early Help Hub and IRS and they are using it to reflect on and improve their communication and restorative approach in working with families.



Our parents group are also considering developing a letter or a video asking what practitioners have done with the 'top tips' and how this has improved their practice.

### 3. We will strive to have a diverse workforce at all levels;

The Children's Services Directorate delivers a number of statutory roles, which support families and protect the most vulnerable members of our society. This includes education services, early help, child protection, looking after children who cannot remain in their birth families and adoption.

Our employees are the front face of our services and engage with children, young people and their parents and carers often during times of stress and difficulty; it is vital that we have the right people in the right jobs with the right skills, experience and qualifications. It is important that they are trained to deal effectively, efficiently and sensitively with the wide range children, young people and their families they come into contact with on a daily basis. They also need to be aware of cultural, religious or individual needs and sensitivities in order to offer an excellent, flexible and accessible service to everyone.

In addition, our social workers are required to be registered with the HCPC, our regulatory body and to adhere to both the Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics and the Professional Capabilities Framework for Social Workers (2012).

#### A representative workforce

(Walsall Council and Children's Services statistics based on Employment Monitoring Report 2018 – 2019 compared to previous annual reporting as at March each year)

The demographics of the population in Walsall are as follows:

	Census 2011 Walsall Working Age Residents (age 16-74)	Walsall Council	Children Services

<b>Male/Female split</b>	49.1% Male 50.9% Female	31.49% ↓ Male 68.51% ↑ Female	14.64% ↓ Male 85.36% ↑ Female
<b>Minority Ethnic</b>	23%	21.59% ↑	26.96% ↑
<b>Disabilities</b>	10.4% (different definition)	4.39% ↓	3.19% ↓

The number of people working for Walsall Council has reduced year on year since 2011/12, resulting in a total workforce of 3141 as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019. Children Services headcount has reduced from 697 last year to 690 this year. However, this small year on year reduction is not representative of a more significant reducing trend in line with the Council overall. At the last time of reporting (March 2016 Employment Monitoring) the headcount in Children's Services was 759. Detailed below are some points for consideration regarding the profile of the workforce:

### Gender

The percentage of female workers in Children's Services at 85.36% is a marginal increase on last year (84.22%) and remains consistently higher than across the Council. As a result, male workers are underrepresented (14.64%), which represents a marginal reduction on last year.

In Children's Services, the percentage split of all males classed as part time workers (1.88%) and female workers (19.86%) shows a reduction in part-time working for both genders year on year and remains at lower levels in the Directorate than the Council overall.

### Gender Pay

The percentage split of female workers to male workers in each grade band in Children's Services remains relatively stable in comparison to the same period 12 months ago, fluctuating as follows:

#### Percentage of female workers by Grade

- Grade 5 and below – 90.07% an increase from 89.26% last year;
- Grade 6 - 9 – 83.79% an increase from 82.34% last year;
- Grade 10-13 – 83.46% an increase from 82.11% last year;
- Grade 14 and above – 95.24% a slight decrease from 95.65% last year.

Overall, and within each grade band this is broadly in line with the gender split in the Directorate.

### Minority Ethnic

In Children's Services, the percentage of minority ethnic workers has remained stable at 26.96%, compared to 26.40% last year. This compares favourably with the Walsall community in which 23% declare as minority ethnic. At March 2019, 9.28% of workers in Children's Services have not stated or chosen not to state their ethnic group, which is an increasing trend year on year of non-declared ethnicity.

### Disability

The percentage of workers within Children's Services who have a disability is 3.19% an increase of 0.32% on last year. It is important to emphasise that 109 staff have chosen not to state whether they have a disability or not which is a marginal decrease from last year (113).

In Children's Services the data shows the following percentage split of workers with a disability in different pay bands in comparison to last year:

Percentage of disabled workers by Grade

- Grade 5 and below – 7.80% an increase from 5.37% last year;
- Grade 6 - 9 – 2.49% a marginal increase from 2.24% last year;
- Grade 10 -13 – 0.79% a decrease from 1.63% last year;
- Grade 14 and above – 0.00% a decrease from 4.35% last year.

The pattern is that of smaller numbers of disabled workers in higher graded posts. However, it should be noted that as the base numbers are small, minor changes significantly affect the pattern, e.g. the 4.35% decrease at Grade 14 and above represents a one-person change.

Age

The 2011 census shows that 16-24 year olds make up the largest group in the local population at 11.7%. However, it would not be an expectation that the Directorate workforce, with a requirement to be largely professionally qualified and experienced should reflect this. In Children's Services, the percentage of the workforce under 25 years of age is 4.64%, higher than the Council overall and stable compared to last year. The largest age group in the Children's Services workforce, in line with other Directorates and the Council as a whole, are 50-54 year olds at 15.22%.

Religion and Sexual Orientation

There continues to be some reluctance from employees to disclose their religion and sexual orientation. Only 43.92% of staff within Children's service have stated their religion, 2.46% prefer not to say and 53.62% not stated. In terms of sexual orientation, 48.84% staff have chosen to state their orientation, which is a slight increase of 3.36% on last year.

The National Picture:

In October 2019, the Dept. for Education published the outcome of a longitudinal study tracking the careers of local authority child and family social workers in England over five years in order to generate evidence on recruitment, retention and progression in child and family social work. This work was commissioned in 2018 and was carried out by IFF Research, Manchester Metropolitan University and the University of Salford.

The survey found that 82% of the workforce nationally were female and the age profile of the workforce was evenly distributed, with 25% aged 34 and under; 26% aged between 35 and 44 and 27% aged between 45 and 54. The proportion aged between 55 and 64 dropped to 20%.

73% of the national study were White British and 10% from Black African or Black Caribbean backgrounds. The majority of those engaged in the study, 82%, did not have a disability, or a long-term physical or mental health condition.

Summary of Progress since 2018/2019

Attracting and retaining young people and an increasingly ageing workforce continues to be a significant problem. Children's Services has recently appointed its first four Social Work Apprentices. Our Newly qualified social worker programme continues to be a regional leader and assists in attracting first time graduates to Walsall.

Employees still remain reluctant to declare religion/beliefs, sexual orientation and to some degree disability and minority groups. We continue to encourage all employees to share this information by providing assurance that this sensitive information will not be disclosed and is simply for management to ensure that our services are representative of the communities we serve. We also want to ensure that all employees with protected characteristics are fully supported and receive an equal opportunity to development opportunities and training.

Employees are trained and confident to fulfil their current roles and future potential:

Employees are most effective if they feel valued, that their opinions are listened to and that they have opportunities to develop and grow to their full potential.

Children's Services has an active and comprehensive workforce development plan, which supports employees at all levels of their career from student, through their first year of qualification and beyond. We have continued to invest in managers at all levels across the service and this year have enabled a further four team Managers to attend First Line, an evidenced base training programme designed to support first line team managers in social work teams to equip them to better support employees through the next round of significant changes within the service.

As a Directorate, we are also continue to invest in a Restorative Approach to delivering our business and have appointed a Restorative Champion to lead on embedding this value based, needs lead approach to engaging with each other, our partners and the children, young people and their families with whom we work.

Our annual WR4C staff conference, held in September 2019, enabled staff to hear from our senior leadership team about the vision for the Directorate. It provided the opportunity for staff to attend one of six workshops covering topics as diverse as Office 365, the Art of the Possible; A Strengths Based approach to Working with Adolescents; Joining the Dots (understanding and using data); Restorative Practice; Strength based Practice in Localities and attending a Schwartz Round. We also heard from our keynote speaker, Paul Nixon. Paul is a consultant social worker and specialises in Relational Practice and Leadership.

Staff were asked what action they would take having attend the conference and a selection of the feedback is provided here:

- Thinking more about what I'm going to do and how I approach and deal with situations
- Look at things in a way that is restorative and look at family more especially before court is considered/started;
- Communication between staff as paramount;
- Importance of relationships and connections;
- Voice of child in all meetings;
- Reflection on work;
- Champion and challenge other to identify solutions as opposed to blockers;
- The speaker was inspirational regarding the strength in communities. Working with families in the widest sense was a clear message;
- Keep myself 'match fit';
- The speaker had a positive impact on me and made me think about my area of work, my team and my morale and how to improve my communication. Highly recommended motivational speaker.

#### Welfare of employees:

This year, in addition to seeking to accommodate all reasonable requests to make reasonable adjustments and undertaking workplace assessments providing the necessary equipment we have introduced the Schwartz Rounds.

Schwartz Rounds are a structured, multidisciplinary forum designed for staff to come together to discuss and reflect on the emotional and social challenges associated with working in Children's Services. The purpose of Rounds is to understand the challenges and rewards that are inherent in providing care, not to solve problems or to focus on the clinical aspects of the work. Rounds provide a confidential space for staff to reflect on and share experiences. Rounds held so far have included "The family I'll never forget" and "Clocking off for Christmas".

#### **4. We will treat people and agencies that we work with, fairly, justly and with respect, by being open, inclusive and collaborative.**

As a Directorate, we have invested in working in a restorative way with each other, our partners and those children and families with whom we work.

Restorative practice seeks to build healthy communities, increase social capital, decrease crime and antisocial behaviour, repair harm and restore relationships. To support our workforce and to help us deliver this transformation, we have appointed a Restorative Champion to lead on embedding this value based, needs lead approach. We are delivering training for all staff across the Directorate and providing a range of tools and reflection opportunities for all staff. These include 'lite-bite' sessions and all staff a monthly 'Thought for Practice' reflecting on a specific aspect of our values, beliefs, behaviours and practice.

We recognise that sometimes things do not go right and monitor the complaints we receive, seeking to learn from these.

<b>Complaints received 2019</b>	<b>Statutory Complaints</b>	<b>Corporate Complaints</b>	<b>Compliments</b>
Q1 (Jan – Mar)	8	30	12
Q2 (Apr – Jun)	10	18	4
Q3 (Jul – Sep)	14	22	13
Q4 ( Oct- 22nd Nov)	2	20	6
<b>Total Jan – 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov 2019</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Total Jan – Dec 2018 (for comparison)</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>47</b>

The overall numbers are comparable with the previous year, The reduction in statutory complaints and a rise in corporate complaints follows advice from the regional complaints benchmarking group regarding standard practice as to how complaints are processed via statutory or corporate route.

The top 5 issues raised by complainants in statutory complaints are:

- Inappropriateness of service/ poor quality of service received;
- Staff attitude;
- Delay in receiving a service;
- Poor communication;
- Inaccuracies in reports and assessments.

Learning from the complaints we received has been routinely shared with our first line managers throughout the year.

## 5. We will find ways to support those who are disadvantaged or excluded

Through our work, we seek to find ways to support those who are disadvantaged or excluded.

### Early years:

Take up of access to 3 and 4 year old funding in the Autumn 2019 was 93.6%, a slight decrease on last year's take up of 97.1%

Funding is available for 2 year olds who have an additional disadvantage. This includes children who are looked after or who have been adopted; children with a profound disability; children whose parents access specific benefits. Take up of this provision in the Autumn 2019 was 83.2%, an increase on last year's uptake of 79.9%.

These funding blocks are designed to support all young children in this age range to access early years' provision and so support them in laying the building blocks for good academic progress and acquire the necessary social skills, which support positive outcomes in later life.

A has been showing a developmental delay in the early years foundation stage (EYFS) Prime areas since starting in Nursery, and it has become apparent that without a high level of intensive support, this gap will widen. Active learning is only accessed in one to one activities. During these times, A's attention span for listening and carrying out activities is extremely limited, as is his ability to sit still for any length of time. His lack of communication must frustrate him, as he cannot state what he wants. Therefore, he uses physical actions to gain attention, which is pretty much all the time.

A has limited emotions and often laughs at things he should not, like children getting hurt and crying. Due to delay in communication, he did not always understand the reasons why this is wrong. Following additional Inclusion funding being provided from the High Needs Special needs Education block, a specialist Makaton trained Teaching Assistant was put in class with A with the funding used to backfill her role in Reception. As a result, A has made significant progress in most areas. Speech and language, managing feelings and behaviour still require further support.

### Early Help:

This Service works with families where there are increasing vulnerabilities and challenges to support children and equip parents to nurture and parent positively.

- L is 16 years old and is diagnosed with ADHD. It is also thought that he is on the Autistic spectrum and had dyslexia. There are concerns that L has been carrying a knife and is being criminally exploited. He has had episodes of going missing, when no one has known where he is; these further increase L's risk of being exploited. L is known to the Youth Justice Service. He struggles in social situations and will often choose not to attend meetings, sometimes leaving the building before the meetings have begun. L's Early Help worker has worked with L to reduce the risk of exploitation and has successfully enabled him to become involved in a local fishing group, which he is really enjoying. The risks L faces have not gone away but they are reducing due to this diversion activity.
- K was on a reduced timetable of just two hrs a day and being educated on his own in school, due to an incident of sexualised behaviour in school. K has autism and it was eventually determined that K's behaviour was a sensory coping mechanism. Early

Help supported the family to enable K to access full-time education in a special school. During this work, K expressed his love for football. Youth Justice have worked with K in relation to his sexualised behaviours and Early Help sourced an autism football team. K is no longer open to Early Help, however, his Mum recently sent a text message which said *"... just thought I'd message you to let you know K did his first trial at football last night all went well and he loves it he's got his first match sunday... Can't thank you enough for all your help"*

#### Children's Social Care:

This Service works with children who are at risk of significant harm to ensure they are protected and achieve good outcomes:

- E has been looked after since October last year. There were serious concerns about E's vulnerability to sexual exploitation. She had many missing episodes before becoming looked after. E's wishes and views are at the heart of the records, in the visits, at her Looked After Children Review, which she chaired, and in the case notes. E has made good progress. She has not gone missing recently. She has worked well with her social worker and with her specialist exploitation worker.
- J lives in a residential home. He has very complex needs. Before becoming looked after his range of needs led to behaviour that adults struggled to cope with. He has made good progress. He is more settled now, for longer periods. J's Pathway Plan is written in his words. It gives a clear picture of J's feelings, thoughts and anxieties. His wishes and views about Family Time, school and the future are detailed. It places him at the centre of his plan.
- C is a 14 year old who was exhibiting an intense interest for the Mafia and serial killers. The school believed that he therefore posed a risk to his family, the local community and the school community and submitted a request for a report to Forensic Child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) suggesting that he was a psychopath. He was being educated, in isolation, in school and was threatened with permanent exclusion if he moved from his isolation zone, albeit there was no other evidence and experienced mental health practitioners did not believe he posed the level of risk being suggested by the school. This left C isolated in school and both C and his family vulnerable and unclear regarding the school's exclusion protocol. The Education Safeguarding Co-ordinator and a social worker became involved and, together, worked with the young person, his family and other partners so that we were able to better understand C, ensuring he was able to access the right services and avoid a permanent exclusion. Throughout this time, the relationship between the school and the local authority was tense due to the challenges made; however, by having an ethical and honest dialogue with school leaders, this was managed appropriately. C has now made a positive start in a new school with staff who understand and empathise with his circumstances; his academic progress is on target and he is working towards high aspirations of achieving the exam grades required to see him progress to university.
- F is a 14-year-old girl who has been looked after for a number of years. Her placement with her current carers has recently been agreed as a permanent one. F sent a thank you letter to the Head of Service, which said, "Thank you for sending me a certificate to say I can stay with R & B until I grow up and I'm ready to leave. I love living with R& B and there is nowhere else I would rather live"

In October 2019, our Front Door Services had a short inspection by Ofsted. In their feedback they said:

- “Leaders have a good understanding of their strengths and areas for improvement, with aspirational plans in place to effect positive change.” (pg3);
- “The local authority’s MASH has improved since the last inspection. Working arrangements are well embedded and well organised, and there are effective governance and processes in place.” (pg.2);
- “Children at risk of significant harm are appropriately identified in the MASH, and timely strategy discussions are held, well attended by partner agencies. The effective multi-agency response means that children’s needs are addressed and children are safeguarded.” (pg 3).

### The Virtual School:

The Virtual School supports and challenges schools and education providers, as well children, young people, children who are adopted and care leavers and their carers, to reach their full education potential. It holds the Pupil Premium, additional funding available to support the educational attainment and aspiration of looked after children and uses this creatively to support looked after children who are at risk of being excluded from school.

The Virtual school has delivered a number of activities during the half term holidays, all of which have included children with Special Educational Needs. One child who has a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and attends a special school came to the graffiti workshop in the Easter holidays. He was so good at not only the artwork but also helping the young children attending the activity that the Virtual School asked him to be part of the face painting team at the primary tea party. He loved this and was so proud having young children come to him to have their face painted.

The Virtual School also asked one of our really shy and withdrawn young people who took part in our photography day to be our in- house photographer at the tea party, again it was great to see her grow in confidence. The Virtual School also hosted the annual Tea Party for our primary aged looked after children and the Excellent Night out for those in secondary school and post 16.

80 primary aged children were nominated for an award, which acknowledged their successes and progress. 53 of these children attended the Tea Party to receive their award. These nominations included:

- Practicing spellings at home every day;
- Being put forward for a special Olympics course;
- Being able to use a knife and fork;
- Being able to go into his classroom on his own;
- Showing resilience and trying to stay happy in difficult times;
- Becoming a buddy for a child with medical needs;
- Being confident, brave and kind;
- Achieving 100% attendance.

Sandwiches, jelly and ice cream were provided, as well as a face painting activity. Everyone who attended enjoyed these and a number of party games.

Over 120 secondary aged children received a nomination for the Excellent Night out with 86 receiving their award on the night for a diverse range of achievements including:

- settling in well to their supported accommodation and demonstrating ability to cook and manage independence;

- Helping another young person settle into a new placement by having conversations with him in Makaton.
- For not giving up and showing determination and dedication towards passing her maths and English GCSE after failing both twice;
- Making excellent progress in college and having ambitions and focus;
- Achieving 100% attendance.

The children and young people who attended performed songs from their favourite musicals and some special 'lookalike' guests from 'The Greatest Showman' joined them. We would also like to acknowledge the support of Tarmac in sponsoring this event.

#### Walsall Youth Justice Service:

Walsall Youth Justice Service (YJS) is a statutory multi-agency partnership, which has the principle aims of preventing and reducing youth offending. The age of criminal responsibility in England is 10 and, when young people become 18, they are transferred to Probation Services.

Between April 2018 and March 2019, in the 10 to 17 population, the YJS worked with 146 court disposals and 176-crime prevention interventions prior to a young person appearing in court.

For diversion interventions;

- White ethnicities were overrepresented in this cohort by 1.3% (42 disposals- 72%; this is higher than 70.7% of the 10 to 17 population);
- Asian or British Asian ethnicities were underrepresented by 12% (5 disposals- 9%; this is lower than 21% of the 10 to 17 population);
- Black ethnicities were overrepresented by 6.5% (five disposals- 9%; this is higher than 2.5% of the 10 to 17 population);
- Mixed ethnicities were overrepresented by 2.1% (four disposals- 7%; this is higher than 4.9% of the 10 to 17 population);
- Other ethnicities were overrepresented by 2.2% (two disposals- 3%; this is higher than 0.8% of the 10 to 17 population).

For crime prevention interventions:

- White ethnicities were overrepresented in this cohort by 6.3% (91 disposals. At 77% this is higher than 70.7% of the 10 to 17 population);
- Asian or British Asian ethnicities were under-represented in this cohort by 12.5% (ten disposals. At 8.5%; this is lower than 21% of the 10-17 population);
- Black or Black British ethnicities were over-represented in this cohort by 6% (ten disposals. At 8.5%; this is higher than 2.5% of the 10-17 population);
- Mixed ethnicities were under-represented in this cohort by 1.4% (four disposals. At 3.5%; this is lower than 4.9% of the 10-17 population);
- Other ethnicities were consistent with the general 10-17 population at 2.5%.

For court disposals;

- White ethnicities were under-represented by 1.7% (121 disposals. At 69%; this is lower than 70.7% of the 10 to 17 population);
- Asian or British Asian ethnicities were under-represented by 15% (eleven disposals. At 6%; this is lower than 21% of the 10 to 17 population);

- Black or Black British ethnicities were over-represented by 14.5% (twelve disposals. At 17%; this is higher than 2.5% of the 10 to 17 population);
- Mixed ethnicities were under-represented by 0.1% (nine disposals. At 5%; this is slightly higher than 4.9% of the 10 to 17 population);
- Other ethnicities were over-represented by 2.2% (five disposals. At 3%, this is higher than 0.8% of the 10 to 17 population).

#### Special Education Needs and Disability:

Following Walsall's Local Area SEND inspection, undertaken by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) between the 4<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> February 2019, we have produced a Written Statement of Action (WSoA). This Statement outlines our shared intention, with all partners, including parents, to deliver services, which maximise opportunities for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), enabling them to benefit from high quality services, designed and co-produced with our partners.

The WSoA has been developed and produced with all stakeholders. Since the publication of the inspection report, we have set up a series of engagement events and workshops with parents, carers, head teachers, SENCos (Special Educational Needs Coordinators) and DSLs (Designated Safeguarding Leads) to help shape our action plan and co-produce the WSoA. We have also held numerous workshops and working sessions with staff from all services within Walsall Council and CCG, NHS and Health partners. This WSoA is the collaborative output from all partners involved. Co-Production is a key theme for our future development, and we know it is important to begin this journey together, as we mean to go on.

As a partnership, we want to create a shared vision and clear strategy for the development of a well-planned, effective, and respected system that works across education, social care and health to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND, and their families.

We recognise that young people and their families deserve much better services and we fully intend to deliver on this. We will build on the things we know from the inspection that already serve children and families well and we will do this by increasing partnership with parents, carers, children and young people, as well as other partners.

An Improvement Board has been established called the Walsall SEND Local Area Improvement Board. Meeting monthly, this Board has responsibility for strategic oversight and accountability of the WSoA. The Improvement Board will report to the Health and Wellbeing Board as the accountable strategic partnership body for the local area.



## Walsall Council Equality and Diversity Information

### Directorate Report

### December 2019

<b>Directorate</b>	<b>Economy and Environment</b>
<b>Executive Director</b>	<b>Simon Neilson</b>
<b>Contact officer</b>	<b>Zoey West</b>
<b>E-mail</b>	<b>Zoey.West@walsall.gov.uk</b>

### Corporate Equality Objectives

Our equality objectives are based on available equalities information through research, consultation, engagement, and Equality Impact Assessments. They help identify internal and external targets that will enable the Council to improve the collection of equality information, and address the most persistent areas of inequalities faced by both employees and customers:

We will:-

- Promote inclusion and commit to understanding the individual experience throughout our work;
- Engage and empower local communities to resolve equality issues;
- Strive to have a diverse workforce at all levels;
- Treat people and agencies that we work with, fairly, justly and with respect, by being open, inclusive and collaborative;
- Find ways to support those who are disadvantaged or excluded.

### Equality Act 2010 Protected Characteristics

Protected characteristics are the grounds upon which discrimination is unlawful under the Equality Act;

Age	Race
Disability	Religion and belief
Gender reassignment	Sex
Marriage and civil partnership	Sexual orientation
Pregnancy and maternity	

## Part 1 Main strategies and plans containing equality and diversity information

Title	Purpose	Availability	
		On request	Internet address
Black Country Regulators Operating Framework  (Regulatory Services Enforcement Policy)	Before deciding that prosecution is appropriate, the relevant Authority will consider all relevant circumstances carefully and will have regard to the public interest and, where appropriate, the views of any victim, injured party or other relevant person or impact on the community. Equal opportunities will be borne in mind in terms of implementing the enforcement policy.	✓	<a href="https://go.walsall.gov.uk/Portals/0/Uploads/Licensing/Combined%20Joint%20Black%20Country%20Regulators%20Operating%20Framework.pdf">https://go.walsall.gov.uk/Portals/0/Uploads/Licensing/Combined%20Joint%20Black%20Country%20Regulators%20Operating%20Framework.pdf</a>
Walsall Council Gambling Act Statement of Principles	<p>This Policy Statement is intended to meet the Licensing Authority's obligations under the Gambling Act 2005,</p> <p>The licensing objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preventing gambling from being a source of crime or disorder, being associated with crime or disorder or being used to support crime</li> <li>• Ensuring that gambling is conducted in a fair and open way</li> <li>• Protecting children and other vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling.</li> </ul>		<a href="https://go.walsall.gov.uk/business/licensing_and_regulation/gambling_licences/gambling_licensing_policy_statement_of_principles">https://go.walsall.gov.uk/business/licensing_and_regulation/gambling_licences/gambling_licensing_policy_statement_of_principles</a>

	Regarding the term “vulnerable persons”, Walsall Council defines this group as people who gamble more than they want to; people whose gambling is beyond their means; and people who may not be able to make informed or balanced decisions about gambling due to a mental impairment, alcohol or drugs.”		
Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Licensing	<p>This document contains the Licence Conditions and Information with regard to driving, operating or owning a PHV or HC. It contains specific sections relating to passengers with disabilities, Guide for loading and securing a Wheelchair and passenger into a vehicle, that the grant of a Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licence is dependent on the vehicle being brand new and wheelchair accessible, that drivers must carry guide or assistance dogs belonging to passengers, free of charge.</p> <p>All new and existing drivers are undertaking a pre licensing Driver Training Course, which has recently been updated and which includes disability awareness, child sexual exploitation and other equality related matters.</p>		<a href="https://go.walsall.gov.uk/taxis">https://go.walsall.gov.uk/taxis</a>  <a href="https://go.walsall.gov.uk/Portals/0/Uploads/Licensing/Licence%20conditions%20MASTER%20UPDATED%20MARCH%202017.pdf">https://go.walsall.gov.uk/Portals/0/Uploads/Licensing/Licence%20conditions%20MASTER%20UPDATED%20MARCH%202017.pdf</a>  <a href="https://go.walsall.gov.uk/Portals/0/images/importedddocuments/criminalmotoring_conviction_guidelines.pdf">https://go.walsall.gov.uk/Portals/0/images/importedddocuments/criminalmotoring_conviction_guidelines.pdf</a>
Walsall Council Food Law Enforcement Service Plan 2018 - 2019	The plan sets out the Council commitment to protecting all residents particularly those who	✓	<a href="https://bit.ly/2EwtTp7">https://bit.ly/2EwtTp7</a>

	are most vulnerable from ill health and fraud within the food and drink produced or sold within the Borough.		
Green Space Strategy 2018-2022	The Green Space strategy looks at the future management, maintenance and development of green spaces across the borough, raising green space quality and putting in place a series of service and process improvements. Walsall Council will be responsible for leading on the delivery of the strategy, but it will need to be a partnership approach to help deliver the vision and aims. Working in partnership, we continue to build on existing partnerships with agencies such as West Midlands Police and Council departments, as well as new partnerships with the wider third sector and diverse communities. There will also be involvement from friends' groups and other community based organisations.		<a href="https://go.walsall.gov.uk/green-spacestrategy">https://go.walsall.gov.uk/green-spacestrategy</a>
Cemetery and Crematorium Rules and Regulations	To guide service users on the expectations of the Council when cemetery and crematorium facilities are accessed.	✓	<a href="https://go.walsall.gov.uk/death-and-bereavement">https://go.walsall.gov.uk/death-and-bereavement</a>
Burial options	To inform service users of the options available from the Council for burial in Walsall cemeteries.	✓	<a href="https://go.walsall.gov.uk/burial-arrangements">https://go.walsall.gov.uk/burial-arrangements</a>

Out of hours burial arrangements	To inform service users of the access and scope of the out of hours burial procedures for burials in Walsall cemeteries.	✓	<a href="https://go.walsall.gov.uk/out_of_hours_burials">https://go.walsall.gov.uk/out_of_hours_burials</a>
Register Office services	To inform service users of the full range of services available centrally through the Register Office.	✓	<a href="https://go.walsall.gov.uk/register-office">https://go.walsall.gov.uk/register-office</a>
Municipal Waste Management Strategy 2004 - 2024	<p>The strategy was approved by Cabinet in May 2004. It set out the strategic framework, options and direction for the management of waste, including collections and disposal in the Borough for the following 20 years. An option was chosen and developed, with ongoing strategic changes being made to waste collection and disposal arrangements to deliver the highest level of sustainability by maximising recycling, maximising the diversion of waste from landfill and minimising the total amount of waste produced whilst remaining understandable and straight forward for residents.</p> <p>Adjustments to the standard wheeled bin service are made for residents who produce more waste due to a health problem or disability and for those who are unable to move a wheeled bin due to age or a disability.</p>	✓	

Urban Forestry Strategy for Walsall Council 2016 - 2026	Sets out how trees, woodland and urban forest in the borough will be managed over the next 10 years and links and informs other strategies such as the Green Space Strategy, Highways Strategy and Waste Strategy. As part of the strategy, the health and safety of both people and property are protected through risk management and pro-active maintenance of the tree stock.		<a href="https://go.walsall.gov.uk/Portals/0/images/importeddocuments/urban_forestry_strategy_draft_march_2016.pdf">https://go.walsall.gov.uk/Portals/0/images/importeddocuments/urban_forestry_strategy_draft_march_2016.pdf</a>
Environmental Improvement Team Plan	The Clean and Green Environmental Improvement team play a part in making Walsall an attractive place to live work and play, providing a network of safe, accessible green spaces, which are full of positive activity which encourages our communities to become healthier. This can be achieved by consultation and involvement with all sections of our diverse community to deliver the green space strategy and the key outcomes of the transformation Fund and by working across service areas, with key partners, organisations and other services.	✓	
Walsall Strategic Economic Plan	The Walsall SEP was approved in 2015 and sets out the strategic economic vision for the borough under the key themes of People, Place and Business, with the aim of promoting inclusive economic growth for the borough and its residents.		<a href="https://www.walsallintelligence.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2019/10/Walsall-SEP-2015.pdf">https://www.walsallintelligence.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2019/10/Walsall-SEP-2015.pdf</a>

	<p>Underpinned by the Local Economic Assessment process, the SEP draws together the priorities set out in a range of strategic documents at national, regional, sub-regional, local and corporate level. It presents these in a single Strategic Economic Framework, demonstrating how these priorities are interlinked and how we are working with partners to address a range of complex and long-term challenges.</p> <p>A review of the Walsall SEP and Economic Framework will be carried out in 2020 to ensure it remains valid and to align it with the priorities of the West Midlands Combined Authority.</p>		
Walsall Local Plan:	Strategy for housing and employment growth and regeneration.		
Walsall Site Allocation Document (Submission Plan )	Ensure appropriate supply of land for industry, housing and open space. Designates for protection the greenbelt and other assets.	✓	
Walsall Town Centre Area Action Plan (Submission Plan )	Promotes opportunities for investment and improvements within the town centre.	✓	
Walsall Site Allocation Document and Town Centre Area Action Plan Sustainability Appraisal (Submission Stage)	Assesses the potential, environmental, social and economic impacts of the plans.		

Black Country SEP	The Black Country Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) sets out the vision, objectives, strategy and actions to improve the quality of life for everyone who lives and works in the Black Country,		<a href="https://www.blackcountrylep.co.uk/about-us/plans-for-growth/strategic-economic-plan/">https://www.blackcountrylep.co.uk/about-us/plans-for-growth/strategic-economic-plan/</a>
M6 Junction 10 Highway Improvements Project	M6 Junction 10 Highway Improvements Project complements the Council's regeneration strategy for the area comprising Darlaston, Pleck and Bentley. The area is the focus of some of Walsall's most significant urban regeneration proposals that will transform unused and unproductive land into a major centre for economic growth and employment, with thousands of jobs being created as part of the Black Country Enterprise Zone. Working in collaboration with Highways England, the road bridges over the M6 motorway will be replaced by two new four-lane bridges. This will increase the capacity of the junction and improve traffic flow through the area. In addition, improvements will be made to the A454 Black Country Route as well as the junction of the A454 Wolverhampton Road / Bloxwich Lane which are situated directly adjacent to M6 Junction 10		<a href="http://www.walsall.gov.uk/m6j10">www.walsall.gov.uk/m6j10</a>
Local Planning Enforcement Plan	Policy for prioritising action on the enforcement complaints received by the Council and for explaining the different types of actions available to the local planning	✓	<a href="https://go.walsall.gov.uk/planning/planning_enforcement/local_enforcement_plan">https://go.walsall.gov.uk/planning/planning_enforcement/local_enforcement_plan</a>

	authority to deal with breaches of planning legislation. It also identifies how the Council will communicate with complainants.		
Transport Strategy 2017-2022	<p>The transport strategy follows the framework of the West Midlands Local Transport Plan (Movement for Growth) and Black Country Core Strategy and identifies proposals and programmes which will improve and develop the transport network across Walsall by;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encouraging economic growth</li> <li>• Stimulating regeneration</li> <li>• Improving the borough's environment</li> <li>• Making the borough a healthier and safer place to live</li> </ul> <p>Providing benefits to all sectors of the borough's diverse communities</p>	✓	<p>Strategy will be hosted at following web link (not able to upload at present due to new website CMS)</p> <p><a href="https://go.walsall.gov.uk/transport_strategies">https://go.walsall.gov.uk/transport_strategies</a></p>
<p>Black Country City Deal</p> <p>Creation of BC Investment Fund;</p> <p>Apprenticeships for high value manufacturing (HVM);</p> <p>Housing, Jobs and Prosperity Demonstrator project;</p> <p>Business Support package</p>	<p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 80 ha of Brownfield land brought into manufacturing use within 4 years, with a further 30 sites for future development over 10 years</li> <li>• 5,800 new manufacturing jobs within 4 years</li> <li>• 1,500 apprenticeships</li> <li>• £120m private sector investment in HVM sites</li> </ul>		<p><a href="https://go.walsall.gov.uk/black_country_city_deal">https://go.walsall.gov.uk/black_country_city_deal</a></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 700 jobs created / safeguarded through support</li> <li>2,800 long term unemployed social housing tenants supported with 900 into employment.</li> </ul>		
Black Country Growth Deal LEP (Local Enterprise Partnership) allocation of £111.23m from 2015/16 to 2017/18 with a further £100.05m from 2018/19 onwards	<p>Outcomes</p> <p>2015-21 across the BC the Growth Deal will create up to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6,000 new jobs</li> <li>• 1,000+ new homes</li> <li>• 3,200 additional businesses helped to grow</li> <li>7,000 additional learners supported to develop skills needed by business.</li> </ul>		<a href="https://www.black-country-growth-deal.uk/government/publications/black-country-growth-deal">https://www.black-country-growth-deal.uk/government/publications/black-country-growth-deal</a>
Black Country EU Investment Strategy LEP allocation of £152m accessed through an approved EU investment strategy	<p>Eligible areas include skills, employment, and social exclusion.</p> <p>Within the ESIF Programme Walsall Council is the accountable body for both ESF and ERDF Technical Assistance Programmes and the Black Country ESF Community Grants Programme, which increases skills and employment amongst disadvantaged groups. All European Structural and Investment Fund projects have equality strategies and implementation plans in place, which are monitored through external audits. Walsall Council's equality plan for the European</p>		<u>Black Country ESIF</u>

	<p>Social Fund (ESF) Technical Assistance project was deemed as 'exemplary' in a recent Article 125 audit. Best practice equality case studies are collated and promoted across the sub-region.</p>		
<p>Guidance for local authorities in England on administering and enforcing the Blue Badge disabled parking scheme</p>	<p>The Blue Badge (Disabled Persons' Parking) Scheme was introduced in 1971, under Section 21 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 ('the 1970 Act').</p> <p>The aim of the scheme is to help disabled people with severe mobility problems to access goods and services, by allowing them to park close to their destination. The scheme is open to eligible disabled people irrespective of whether they are travelling as a driver or as a passenger.</p> <p>The scheme provides a national range of on-street parking concessions to Blue Badge holders. It allows them to park without charge or time limit in otherwise restricted on-street parking environments, and allows them to park on yellow lines for up to three hours, unless a loading ban is in place.</p>		<p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/519091/blue-badge-scheme-local-authority-guidance-paper.pdf">https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/519091/blue-badge-scheme-local-authority-guidance-paper.pdf</a></p>

Playing Pitch Strategy	Ensuring the borough has a Playing Pitch estate that is accessible and meets the needs of the local community.	✓	
Public Health Services Transformation Fund	<p>The Transformation Fund provides investment from the Public Health ring fenced budget across Council Directorates, including Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Economy and Environment to fund services that deliver public health outcomes for Walsall residents.</p> <p>This helps to address (Mental health support services, domestic abuse refuge service and specialist residential rehabilitation services, Children's Centres, parenting programmes, teenage pregnancy services, sports development, air quality monitoring, regulatory services, green spaces and health at work</p> <p>We continue to work closely with Clean and Green Services and Sport and Leisure Development Services to improve parks, play areas, green spaces and community based physical activity across Walsall. The key outcomes to improving health are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing physical activity;</li> </ul>		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increasing opportunities to reduce the number of overweight individuals;</li> <li>Increasing social contacts to benefit mental health and wellbeing.</li> </ul>		
The Walsall Plan: Our Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2017-2020	<p>The Walsall Plan: Our Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2017-2020 incorporates partnership working and commitment from Walsall Partnership Boards including the Economic Board, Safer Walsall Partnership, Walsall Safeguarding Board, and a newly developed Housing Board.</p> <p>Collectively, they aim to increase economic prosperity through increased growth, maximise people's health, wellbeing and safety and create healthy and sustainable places and communities.</p> <p>The plan is currently undergoing further review to reduce the number of priorities and actions and to provide more focus as a Walsall Partnership. This will be finalised in Feb/ March 2019.</p>	✓	
Director of Public Health Annual Report	The DPH Annual Report 2016/17 is themed around mental health and wellbeing, and recommendations of how we can work	✓	<a href="https://www.walsallintelligence.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2018/1">https://www.walsallintelligence.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2018/1</a>

	together to improve this important issue for the residents of Walsall.		<a href="#">0/DPH-Annual-Report-2016-17-CJH.pdf</a>
Walsall Multi-Agency Suicide Prevention Strategy 2018-2023	Walsall Multi-Agency Suicide Prevention Strategy takes a broad approach to improving the mental health and wellbeing of people living in the borough. It seeks to raise awareness of suicide, encourage help-seeking behaviour amongst high-risk groups and to tackle the social, health and economic factors that increase suicide risk.		<a href="https://www.walsallintelligence.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2019/03/Walsall-Multiagency-Suicide-Prevention-Strategy-2019.pdf">https://www.walsallintelligence.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2019/03/Walsall-Multiagency-Suicide-Prevention-Strategy-2019.pdf</a>
Public Health Services Transformation Fund	<p>The PH Transformation Fund provides investment from the Public Health ring fenced budget across Council Directorates to help fund services that address health inequalities across the borough of Walsall.</p> <p>The funds cover work for Mental health support services, domestic abuse refuge service, parenting programmes, teenage pregnancy services, air quality monitoring, healthier options in food outlets, health at work and A*STARS (Active Sustainable Travel and Road Safety programme).</p>	✓	
The Walsall Plan: Our Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2017-2021 (Refresh)	The Walsall Plan: Our Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2017-2020 underwent a refresh this year. Our focus for the next 18 months will be	✓	<a href="https://go.walsall.gov.uk/Portals/0/Uploads/PublicHealth/60112%20Walsall%20Our%20Health">https://go.walsall.gov.uk/Portals/0/Uploads/PublicHealth/60112%20Walsall%20Our%20Health</a>

	<p>a multi-agency approach to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The prevention of Violence</li> <li>• Improving Wellbeing – getting Walsall ‘on the move’</li> </ul> <p>Improving the Environment of our Town Centre</p>		<a href="#">h%20and%20Wellbeing%20Strategy%202017-2020.pdf</a>
Director of Public Health Annual Report	<p>The DPH Annual Report 2017/18 has been published. It explores the health inequalities that exist across Walsall’s communities (wards). It includes topics such as population, deprivation, assets (facilities), social segmentation, education, crime and regeneration and emphasises the responsibility of everyone in helping to make a difference.</p> <p>The 2018/19 report will be released once it has been seen by Health and Wellbeing Board members, at December’s Board meeting. This takes a focus on all areas of Health Protection such as in schools and care homes and the role of other organisations in supporting this.</p>	✓	<a href="https://www.walsallintelligence.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2019/07/DPH-Annual-Report-2018.pdf">https://www.walsallintelligence.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2019/07/DPH-Annual-Report-2018.pdf</a>
Walsall Road Safety Strategy 2019	The Walsall Road Safety Strategy sets out Walsall’s local vision and supports the regional aspiration to reduce killed and		<a href="https://go.walsall.gov.uk/Portals/0/Uploads/Transport/Walsall">https://go.walsall.gov.uk/Portals/0/Uploads/Transport/Walsall</a>

	seriously injured casualties (KSI). The strategy also recognises the need to develop a more holistic approach to project appraisal and evaluation to ensure that targeted improvements and initiatives, consistent with the United Nation's Safer Systems approach, are delivered. This approach supports a vision of improved quality of life and equality for all our residents.		<a href="#"><u>%20Road%20Safety%20Strategy.pdf</u></a>
Walsall Infant Mortality Strategy 2016-21	The Walsall Infant Mortality Strategy has set out actions for all stakeholders in Walsall to reduce infant mortality in Walsall but also to ensure that all children thrive and reach potential.	✓	Available on request from Public Health Walsall
Black Country LMS Healthy Pregnancy Strategy 2018-2022	The strategy focuses on the challenges across the Black Country in terms of deprivation and the coordinated approach to improve outcomes for pregnancy and outcomes at birth and during the first year of life of the child. Health inequalities can be reduced by addressing such issues as reducing the number of women who smoke at the time of delivery, promoting a Smoke free pregnancy, improving perinatal mental health, healthy start vitamin uptake, breast feeding, promoting safe sleep.	✓	Available on request from Public Health Walsall
Walsall Tobacco Control Plan	Smoking is the biggest modifiable lifestyle behaviour, which contributes to health inequalities. The tobacco control plan outlines		<a href="https://go.walsall.gov.uk/healthywalsall/LIVING-"><u>https://go.walsall.gov.uk/healthywalsall/LIVING-</u></a>

	<p>a strategic approach to working with groups where the smoking prevalence is higher; target groups pregnant women and people with mental health are being prioritise to support them to quit. The plan outlines work being done to address illicit tobacco, which affects the price sensitive smoker more. The plan outlines work to support those who are unemployed and in manual labour jobs.</p>		<p><u>WELL/Walsall-Stop-Smoking-Services</u></p>
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## Part 2 Equality Impact Assessments November 2018 to October 2019

Service	Title	Contact officer name
Public Health	Healthy Child Programme 0-19	Emily Smith / Esther Higdon
Planning	Walsall Planning Service Transformation	Shawn Fleet
Regulatory Services	Food Law Enforcement Service Plan 19-20	David Elrington
Leisure Services	Removal of Sunday working	David Gill/Chris Holliday
Blue Badge	Online Blue Badge Application	Janet Read
Sport and Leisure	Outdoor Pursuits – Service Cessation	Ben Percival
Regeneration and Development	Walsall Town Centre Masterplan	Simon Tranter / Hannah Willetts / Valdheer Rajania

## Part 3 Equality and Diversity Objectives

### 1. We will promote inclusion and commit to understanding the individual experience throughout our work

#### Public Health and Partners

Public Health and partners (e.g. Employment and Skills team, Substance Misuse Change, Grow, Live (CGL)) are supporting local people who are out of work to reduce health related barriers. This includes support to Care Leavers, as well as residents with a range of health conditions, including mental health, musculoskeletal issues and individuals recovering from chronic drug and alcohol use.

Public Health also commissions a range of targeted Lifestyle services across a range of settings, such as workplaces, green spaces and community buildings. This includes a digital platform and triage to support for NHS Health Checks, stop smoking, physical activity, emotional health and wellbeing and diet and nutrition.

In partnership working with professionals across the whole of the health and social care economy and with our voluntary and community sector partners, Public Health have launched *Making Connections Walsall* (MCW). The vision is to:

- Tackle loneliness and social isolation and improve social connections;
- Improve wellbeing and reduce preventable health service and social care usage;
- Develop older people's wellbeing plans for all people over 60 years;
- Develop the voluntary sector to meet the needs of older people;
- Improve community health literacy and provide information about local community activities;
- Encourage and support communities to access appropriate health and care provision.

MCW is a free service providing a clear route of referral into community social support to address loneliness and social isolation

#### Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment

Community Protection have supported work to develop a Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment in an attempt to identify and work towards addressing the needs of this protected group. This supportive approach is reflected in the practice of the Community Protection team when dealing with unauthorised encampments. Examples of practical support given include, supporting into permanent accommodation a single mother with young children who no longer wanted to travel and working with Public Health colleagues to distribute water to a number of encampments during the very hot summer. In addition, where vulnerabilities have been identified in the occupants of an unauthorised encampment the enforcement process has been modified to take account of any identified needs.

### Community Protection Enforcement Work

In line with the Black Country Enforcement Policy, vulnerabilities are considered before any decision to pursue enforcement action is taken. An example of this is where an individual captured on camera committing a fly tipping offence was during the course of the investigation found to have mental health issue. Subsequently, no action was taken against the individual concerned. Identified vulnerabilities are considered during any investigation undertaken by Community Protection and, where appropriate, referral pathways for support and intervention are followed.

### Trading Standards – Scams, Rogue Traders and Door step Crime

If people are persuaded to part with money because of postal, telephone or electronic communication received into the home they may well have been scammed.

This can often take place on an industrial scale through:

- Fictitious prize draws
- False investment opportunities
- Pension fraud or bogus equity release schemes
- Clairvoyant or dating scams
- Fake lotteries

These scams often use techniques such as sales scripts, data collection and targeted mail. They may play on the aspirations as well as the vulnerability of the victim. Victims' details are often passed around criminal groups, leading to repeat victimisation.

Several forms of this crime take place on the doorstep. Victims are cold-called at their homes and persuaded to part with money. The most common form is charging an extortionate price for unnecessary work not completed. The average victim loses about £1,000 to scams but some have lost their homes, their life savings and many thousands of pounds. Financial loss is not the only cost. Feelings of vulnerability can have an overwhelming impact on many victims. Elderly victims are 2.4 times more likely to die or go into a care home than those who are not scammed.

National Trading Standards to the Citizens Advice Consumer Service have outsourced first line civil advice for many years now. However, Walsall Trading Standards have continued to assist vulnerable consumers in civil disputes as well as investigating all complaints of scams, doorstep crime and rogue trading with the aim of providing support to vulnerable victims and effective enforcement action against perpetrators.

### Transport and Active Travel

The West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan aims to improve the accessibility of development sites to generate growth and jobs, whilst promoting active travel and improving air quality. The Black Country Core Strategy has similar goals, aiming to improve access to employment, improve road safety and improve air quality. The Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Walsall also aims to improve employment, promote active travel and Physical Activity, improve air quality, improve road safety and improve access to healthcare. The findings of the Health Impact Assessment show that, overall, the Scheme is expected to make a positive contribution to the objectives of local and regional planning policy. The Scheme is expected

to provide health benefits in and around the Walsall. Noise impacts are the only overall minor adverse impacts, and access to healthcare and physical activity is only expected to be minor adverse during construction. There is expected to be no impacts in terms of human health due to changes to air quality. The Scheme is expected to be minor beneficial overall for employment, during operation for access to healthcare, Physical Activity, driver safety and driver stress. The benefits of the Scheme stem from improvements to the junction leading to increased efficiency across the road network.

#### Equalities and Diversity - 21st Century Information and Skills

On 14 January 2018, 21st Century Information and Skills extended Sunday opening so that every Walsall library now opens on Sundays – compared with only two other libraries across the rest of the Black Country.

Weekend opening is important to provide access to library services for working people and families, and to provide quiet places for homework and study that not all children and students may have access to at home. It also enables equality of access regardless of particular faith or Sabbath days.

In addition, the Mobile Library introduced a new Saturday service in May, specifically to target those areas of the Borough that no longer have a static library. The Home Library Service ensures access to library resources for people unable to get to a library or mobile library service, and includes a home delivery service with a focus on Asian and Asian language material.

21st Century Information and Skills began providing free access to PressReader to celebrate national Libraries Week, 8-13 October 2018. This is available in all of the borough's libraries, or from any device anywhere at any time. It provides access to over 7,000 full colour newspapers and magazines, from Britain and more than 100 countries all around the world in over 60 languages.

This gives access to current news material for the widest range of people across the Borough, with titles downloaded monthly from many different countries – and free with just a Walsall library card. It means having access without having to get to a physical library or being restricted by library opening hours, and provides access to papers not even available in printed form in the UK.

It also includes all the main British newspapers and Sunday editions. People can choose to have particular titles delivered directly to their device each day – so it is a great way to save money, and make newspapers and magazines equally available to the widest range of people. All newspapers are identical to the printed editions and issued at the same time as the print versions are published. It is a great service to support diversity.

Bloxwich District Library hosts and provides material for a Reading Group specifically for Blind and Partially Sighted People.

Shaping a Sustainable Healthy Environment - a programme of work bringing colleagues across the Council together to look at ways to improve the environment for all the residents of Walsall. It is aimed at reducing health inequalities, by considering planning decisions on our health and wellbeing, including green spaces, air quality, sustainable travel. A working group has developed an action plan to progress some of the key issues.

Health Protection - The health protection service provides education and training, guidance and support and outbreak / incident management to the health and social care economy, businesses, schools and nurseries within Walsall. This is to ensure that all necessary steps are taken to protect the residents of Walsall and those who work and travel here from avoidable infections and other substances harmful to health.

The Public Health commission 'Food For Life' delivers an evidenced based programme in Walsall schools and early years settings. The whole setting approach to food and nutrition uses food as a way to improve the whole setting experience - making lunchtimes a more positive feature of the day and enriching learning with farm visits and practical cooking and growing.

The programme improves health and wellbeing and supports all six recommendations from the Marmot Review. It offers more opportunities for social contact through food, building families and communities and tackling loneliness by eating together. In Walsall, there are currently thirty-one early years settings enrolled, eleven have been awarded and a total of thirty-two schools enrolled, with four achieving the bronze award.

Walsall Council School Catering team has been awarded the prestigious Bronze Food For Life Served Here Award for its primary school meals (<https://www.foodforlife.org.uk/about-us/food-for-life-served-here>). The award covers 29 schools with 10,000 meals served daily and 1,900,000 served on an annual basis. Achievement of the Bronze Award gives us the independent recognition our students are served a range of healthy and nourishing meals. It also guarantees that at least 75% of dishes are freshly prepared from unprocessed ingredients, menus provide for all dietary and cultural needs, all suppliers have been verified to ensure that apply appropriate food safety standards and catering staff are supported with skills training in fresh food preparation and Food for Life Served Here. The Bronze Award also ensures that food provided has no undesirable additives or trans fats, eggs served are from cage-free hens, meat comes from farms which meet UK welfare standards and no fish is served from the 'fish to avoid' list. In addition, the award recognises that menus are inclusive of cultural needs and dietary requirements, so every student's wishes are catered for.

The Achievement of the Served Here bronze award will support the wider Food For Life public health commission to adopt a whole school approach to food, nutrition and oral health in our 'early years' settings and schools.

The A\*STARS programme provides a number of age related pathways to support staff, pupils, parents, governors and anyone who has an interest in promoting healthy lifestyles. Employing a series of walking, cycling, scooting and road safety initiatives and a tailored package of support that is given to schools to help them to develop and promote safer, healthier lifestyle choices for all.

A cornerstone of the programme has been the adoption of a revolutionary approach to delivery. The integration between the public health, road safety and children's services has been critical to its success and this has been recognised nationally.

Employing this approach has delivered significant benefits from this integrated approach. The combination of delivering the statutory duties associated with the local authority and a public health approach to evaluate and target more effectively.

The majority of children in A\*STARS schools are using active or sustainable modes of travel to school contributing to objectives around physical activity and reduced congestion.

## **2. We will engage and empower local communities to resolve equality issues**

### Consultation and Listening to what people say

Community engagement is an ongoing process if it is to have meaningful outcomes. All consultation should have a clear purpose and be designed to ensure that the information gathered is what is wanted, meaningful and can inform the required outcomes. Results should be published. Especially to the people who have taken part and they should be aware of the reason behind the consultation. Consultation is useful for gathering information and testing perceptions, but more in depth engagement using dialogues with resident of all communities and service users is invaluable in understanding the underlying drivers for using a service and the values of that service to the individual.

We are currently embarking on consultation, following approval by Cabinet, of the draft revenue budget and efficiency plan 19/20 for stakeholder consultation (where required) and for an EqlA with feedback on these to inform the final budget. All major changes to services require a robust EqlA to identify the impact on people with protected characteristics and to assess and potentially address or mitigate any disadvantage.

The Council has undertaken consultation on a revised Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). The SCI is an important part of Walsall's Local Plan and is a legal requirement as set out in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended). The SCI sets out how the Council will involve communities in developing plans and policies, as well as their involvement in the planning application process. The Council is legally required to undertake statutory consultation as part of the plan making process and the SCI provides the guidance on to ensure the Council meets these legal requirements. The need to review the SCI has been triggered by a number of planning legislations or national policy changes. It is therefore crucial that the SCI is up-to-date so it can provide clear information to all our customers and staff. The Revised SCI was consulted on between 30 July and 24 September 2018 with adoption timetabled for November 2018.

## **3. We will strive to have a diverse workforce at all levels**

At the forefront of our services is our workforce. It is vital that they are trained to deal effectively, efficiently and sensitively with the wide range of people, they meet on a daily basis. They also need to be aware of cultural, religious or individual needs and sensitivities in order to offer an excellent, flexible and accessible service to everyone.

It is important to us that we work collaboratively with staff, that their opinions are listened to and that they have opportunities to develop and grow to their full potential. Some of the ways in which we do this are:

- Encourage people to declare disability;
- Target recruitment via positive action statements to areas of under-representation e.g. young people;
- Support Apprenticeships;
- Assess the impact on the workforce profile of service budget reductions and examine and monitor workforce composition to ensure they have appropriate skills for the future;
- Creation of a Staff Forum, the Chair of which has a regular presence at Directorate Management Team (DMT).

#### Staff are trained and confident to fulfil their current roles and future potential

A DMT Charter is in place which states:

*“As a management team we are aware that our attitude and the way in which we behave can affect you as our employees. With this in mind we have prepared a Charter to guide the way we conduct ourselves and understand the importance of making this clear to you.”*

Staff need to be aware/mindful of the way they are perceived by members of the public. Staff whose role involves speaking directly to members of the public should be given additional training to go alongside training required for their role, i.e., how to speak to members of the public, how to de-escalate a situation in a professional manner.

Staff should also respect the member of public and be mindful of whether or not it is necessary to relay the conversation with their colleagues and consider the feelings of the member of public. They should also be mindful that their conversations are being overheard whilst on the phone and whilst talking to their colleagues, they could be seen as ridiculing that particular member of the public.

The Charter covers aspects of behaviour including being Supportive (spending time to get to know people); Respect (respecting colleagues and modelling good behaviour); being Positive (celebrating success and acknowledging individual contributions); Empowering (encouraging innovation and valuing diversity); working Collaboratively and being open to Development (taking responsibility for your own learning and development and encouraging others to do the same).

The following actions are examples of achievement so far

- To help address the under representation of younger people within the service, the directorate has a number of apprentices in post across a wide range of services from administration to vehicle maintenance technicians. The directorate actively works with its partners contractors such as Tarmac to place apprentices many of which whom have successfully secured permanent work placements;

- The directorate continues to offer work experience to young people for example Public Health continue to undertake health care courses and have close links with Wolverhampton and Birmingham Universities. The service also considers requests from individuals who are seeking work place opportunities in teams such as planning and building control;
- A number of team building events have taken place within the business support service facilitated by Learning and Development colleagues that have helped to identify areas for development and in turn tailor training;
- More than 30 Sport and Leisure staff undertaking apprenticeship training. Sport and Leisure are also hosting a care-leaver apprentice.

Economy and Environment has 71 Apprentices, 34% are between the ages of 16 to 24. 46% of Apprentices are from BAME groups. The split between new recruits and existing staff is 25% (new) with a range of qualifications including:

Activity Leadership  
Associate Project Manager  
Business and Administration  
Chartered Management Degree Apprenticeship  
Civil Engineering Degree Apprenticeship  
Commercial Procurement and Supply  
Customer Service  
Employability Practitioner  
Exercise and Fitness  
Junior Management Consultant  
Leisure Operations  
Operations Manager  
Regulatory Compliance  
Senior Leadership Degree Apprenticeship  
Team Leader/Supervisor  
Waste Operative  
Vehicle Maintenance

The construction industry as a whole is still 92% male dominated, Walsall's Building Control Service successfully employed a young female apprentice in January 2018 supported by the Council's Apprenticeship Levy.

#### **4. We will treat people and agencies that we work with, fairly, justly and with respect, by being open, inclusive and collaborative**

Working in partnership with our contractors to support and enable local people into jobs  
In recognition of local employers' efforts in helping local residents to improve their skills and move them into employment, Walsall Council's Walsall Works team awards quality marks to companies that demonstrate social value.

These awards depend on the level of activity that each employer have delivered. During 2019, six employers were given Gold Partner status; AF Blakemore, Lovell Partnerships, Midcounties Co-operative, Walsall College, WHG and ZF Lemforder. Each of these companies had demonstrated extensive work in the following seven areas;

1. Creating and sustaining employment for local people;
2. Helping local people to increase their skills and improve their employability;
3. Creating more opportunities for local companies through supply chains;
4. Supporting Walsall's most vulnerable residents to improve their health and wellbeing;
5. Helping local schools to raise aspiration and improve educational attainment;
6. Supporting community-managed facilities and developing community-based initiatives;
7. Increasing diversity and inclusivity in the workplace.

During the awards event in September, 25 Bronze Partners were also presented their awards and took part in workshops to find out more about how to get involved in social value activities and make commitments to local people and communities. Through this, the aim is to create more Silver and Gold Partners and increase the amount of opportunities available to Walsall's people.

#### Black Country Impact Team

The team works with young people aged 16 – 29 who are not in education employment or training on a 1-2-1 basis to remove significant barriers to work and help them get back into training or work. They also help them access housing support, training support, application help and other services.

This includes specialist provision provided a by key contracted partners to deliver services for ex-offenders, those with health issues including disability and mental health. Specifically targeted are looked after children and children from travelling communities.

We are working within local schools and community organisations on employment and skills priorities such as providing labour market information to young people, providing employability courses and sessions as well encouraging the business community to engage with schools and young people.

#### External Funding Team

The Council attracts external funding in order to enhance the quality of its services it provides for and with the local community. The approach plays a key role in enabling the Council to work more closely with its partners to deliver key actions around children and young people, health, social care and well-being, lifelong learning, economic and environmental regeneration and community safety.

The team leads on the management of the Black Country European Structural Funds Programme 2014-2020 on behalf of the four Black Country Local Authorities and Black Country Consortium.

The Black Country Technical Assistance project and its contractors monitor equality and diversity targets through delivery of the project and that of its sub-contractors. Equality reporting is a mandatory theme in procurement procedures, systems and processes.

The Council have successfully delivered the Community Grants Programme, which is part of the ESF Programme, distributing £1.5 million in small grants in the Black Country region between 2016 and 2018. The programme is designed to assist small charities and not for profit groups to engage with local communities to deliver a range of skills and employment support activities to enable people from the hardest to reach communities, experiencing multiple disadvantages, to make progress towards the labour market. Grants of between £5,000 and £15,000 are available. The Council were successful in securing the contract to continue to manage the Community Grants Programme to 2021.

## **5. We will find ways to support those who are disadvantaged or excluded**

### Public Health and Partners

Public Health Walsall commission a number of contracts with external partners that seek to address a range of issues affecting health and wellbeing. These include:

- an integrated Healthy Lifestyle service, providing targeted support to adults and children across a range of settings, such as community and workplaces. The service includes a digital platform and triage, tailored lifestyle support, NHS Health Checks, healthy workplace support and a healthy families programme;
- an integrated Drug and Alcohol service supporting those who are socially excluded and/or with mental health and wellbeing issues as a result of, or as a consequence of, substance misuse;
- 0-19 Healthy Child programme that provides a range of services from school readiness, health in schools (Food for Life, screening and immunisation, healthy travel etc), health visiting, parenting, infant mortality, breastfeeding, smoking in pregnancy etc providing services across all of Walsall and in supporting vulnerable, minority and deprived communities;
- an integrated Sexual Health to address teenage pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, safer practices in partnership with healthcare partners.

Following a recent efficiency process, a new Healthy Spaces team, led by Public Health, has been implemented within the Council. The aim of the redesigned service is to create a single team, including some of the previously commissioned elements of Sport and Leisure and Parks and Green Spaces.

The proposal will deliver a range of outcomes to improve health and wellbeing (e.g. increased physical activity and mental wellbeing) across a range of settings and for all residents, including:

- Couch to 5k is a 12 week running programme designed to get non-runners to start running and be able to achieve a 5km distance by the end of it, by attending the weekly parkrun delivered by volunteers held at weekends in Walsall Arboretum, Bloxwich Park, Pelsall Park, Oak Park and, more recently, Palfrey Park;
- Similar groups available for cycling and walking activities (Broadway Walk, Community Cycling group).

#### Big Lottery Fund – match funders of the Black Country Impact project

The Big Lottery Fund is a non-departmental public body responsible for distributing funds raised by the National Lottery for "good causes". It supports the aspirations of people who want to make life better for their communities across the UK. The Big Lottery Fund is responsible for giving out 40% of the money raised by the National Lottery and invests over £650 million a year in projects big and small in health, education, environment and charitable purposes.

Since June 2004, the Big Lottery Fund has awarded over £8 billion to projects that change the lives of millions of people. Every year the Big Lottery Fund funds 13,000 small local projects tackling big social problems like poor mental health and homelessness. Since the National Lottery began in 1994, £34 billion has been raised, with more than 450,000 grants awarded.

#### Black Country Impact

The Black Country Impact programme addresses the barriers faced by unemployed individuals aged between 15 and 29 years. The programme supports them to secure positive outcomes including employment, apprenticeships, training and further education. Our individualised approach and alternative delivery structures provides flexible personalised learning and support that addresses the range of different personal and skills needs of young adults.

Access to trusted advice and support is key to the programme's success, whilst working alongside partners, including housing, health, transport and employers, ensures that individuals have the best possible opportunity to overcome the range of barriers they may face. It will also ensure that they effectively participate, achieve a positive outcome and remain engaged.

Public Health have developed specific pathways for ensuring tailored health and wellbeing support is provided. Targeted groups include looked after children and children from travelling communities.

#### Black Country Impact project partners and overall funding allocation

The Black Country Impact is made up of five partners, Dudley Council, Sandwell Council, Walsall Council, Wolverhampton Council and Black Country Talent Match (Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council project funded by the Big Lottery Fund).

The specific breakdown of funding for the Black Country Impact project is made up of £17 million Youth Employment Initiative funding, £17 million European Social Fund and £17 million of match funding from the five Black Country Partners (which also includes £8 million of match funds from the Big Lottery Fund). This brings the total value of Black Country Impact project to £51 million, for 2018.

The Walsall Impact team have supported 2859 participants so far of which 79% were from the disadvantaged groups identified, making a real impact in the success of young people in Walsall and across the Black Country.

The Black Country European Social Fund (ESF) Community Grants programme aims to engage with local community groups and organisations to deliver a range of skills and employment support activities to enable people from the hardest to reach communities, experiencing multiple disadvantages, to make progress towards the labour market.

The priority groups to benefit from support include people aged 50 and over, those from ethnic minorities, those with disabilities or health conditions, females and offenders/ex-offenders. The funding supports any activity, which can help the individual, progress towards employment and improve employability skills such as; taster sessions, informal or non-accredited learning, volunteering and work experience placements, job search assistance and softer skills, confidence building and personal development.

Since April 2019, the project has issued 21 grants to local community and voluntary groups to deliver bespoke employability services to those hardest to reach communities.

Walsall Leather Museum has been working with the supported learning students at Walsall College for over 20 years now, providing them with a gallery venue for their annual Art and Design exhibition and supporting them with display and publicity.

Stitchers and Skivers is a monthly craft club at Walsall Leather Museum designed to support social interaction – for example, one person has lived with a chronic illness for 20 years that had led to some mental health issues, and is noticeably growing in confidence with each session with likeminded people. Another was booked into the Stitchers to attend by her daughter specifically to decrease her risk of social isolation following a bereavement.

The Leather Museum also introduced an anti-bullying activity for young people –making a leather heart, which the children may augment by putting a message inside.

Services across Economy and Environment continue to increase the employment opportunities for people who, through illness, disability, etc. have difficulty in securing employment and require work experience to improve their employability. The following Case studies illustrate this work and the benefits it has provided for individuals involved. (All of individuals have given their permission to be identified and for their stories told).

## Case Study 1

APPENDIX 2

### Food for Life Walsall

2017 - 2020



Walsall Council



## Fullbrook Nursery School: Birmingham & the Black County's first Food for Life Early Years Award



In March 2018 Fullbrook Nursery School became the **first** early years setting in Birmingham and the Black Country (Walsall, Sandwell, Dudley and Wolverhampton) to achieve a Food for Life Early Years Award!

### Food quality and where food comes from...

Fullbrook demonstrated that they use free range eggs and through their Snack Shack they ensure that food complies with national standards or guidelines on food and nutrition by serving fresh fruit, vegetables milk or water to the children.

*"Our Food for Life award is an integral part of us being an Outstanding Nursery School, as children's health and wellbeing is paramount to early development and future life style choices"*

*Andrina, Headteacher*

### Food leadership and food culture...

they have been able to demonstrate that they have a food policy which describes how they work with children, parents, carers and staff to grow, cook and enjoy fresh, healthy food. They have been able to demonstrate that they signpost families to oral health improvement programmes and offer oral health advice by hosting a tooth care week. They invite the mobile dental van, oral hygienist and a local dentist and also provide parents with a dental care routine and tooth brush for each child.



### Community, partnerships and parent engagement...

they engage families through growing sessions and plan to introduce family taste and talk sessions throughout the year.



**Food Education...** they have been able to demonstrate that they take part in cooking sessions with their children regularly using the vegetables that they have grown on site. They have cooked soup, samosas and quiches with the children and sent recipes home to parents.

Food for Life Walsall



Steps to Work is the lead organisation for BRIDGES, one of the four Black Country BBO programmes aimed at assisting people across Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton to develop their skills and confidence.

They are working with 18 partner organisations across the Black Country (6 based in Walsall) with the aim of the project being to provide an individualised and broad approach support to those with multiple barriers. The support is individually tailored to meet participant needs, and to move closer towards employment. Each organisation is handpicked to deliver the project based on their varied specialisms, including supporting people with disabilities, mental health issues, addictions, homelessness and financial issues among many more.

### **Case study 2**

Peter joined BRIDGES for support to find employment. He was depressed and suffered anxiety because of dyslexia and his predicament of being homeless. He had split from his partner and was unable to support payment of household bills. This led to him being in debt. He slept in shelters around the town and felt displaced, as he had no address or job.

After meeting BRIDGES Outreach Project Officer Nigel, Peter was offered support for his homelessness and support for one to one job search that was paramount as it meant finding employment, which would mean him moving back in with his partner. He was offered a referral for debt advice and inquiries were made to a temporary shelter for his homelessness.

After one-to-one intensive job search support, which he preferred because of his dyslexia, he was contacted by a local pub who offered him an interview. He attended the interview and was successful in being offered the position of Kitchen Porter/Bartender. BRIDGES further supported Peter with work clothing purchase, as they were needed to start employment. "Thanks to BRIDGES for supporting me into employment and purchasing my work clothing. Now I am able to resolve my homelessness.

### **Case Study 3**

The Walsall based Community Footprints Project "Inspire Me 2" aims to work with individuals with mental health conditions increased confidence and self-mothers with drug and alcohol and to be able to move closer to based holistic therapy training. inclusivity that reduces social to make friends and grow their project consists of a 6-week



Indian Head Massage, Reflexology, Reiki, Crystal Healing, Meditation and Relaxation with further training in chosen areas by the participants. This gives participants solid employability skills, which builds confidence and can be transferred to either higher education, employment

and struggling families, to encourage esteem. The project supports problems to overcome their issues the labour market through skills The project promotes diversity and isolation, supporting the participants own peer support network. The programme, which includes tasters in

or self-employment. Other benefits of the project include acquiring new skills, participants learning how to reduce stress and anxiety, re-build and develop life-changing experiences.

Kerry, a local resident and participant of Inspire Me 2 said, “I found the course very good, it has helped me learn new skills and meet new people. I hoped the course could help me improve my confidence and it certainly has. I have felt happier in myself, the staff are really helpful and gave me ideas on how I can stay positive and move forward.”

Her project worked states “Kerry has improved in confidence so much over the weeks, she has shown an interest in a number of areas of holistic therapy, we hope to support her to find help to funding for future courses to help her find employment.”

The project is financed by the ESF and Education and Skills Funding Agency. Walsall Council is the lead accountable body for the Black Country.

#### **Case Study 4**

Black Country Impact works with a wide range of residents facing barriers to getting into work. Nicholas was 25 when he signed up for the programme and was looking to develop and administrative career in an IT setting. The barriers he faced were that fact that he had never been in paid work and did not hold any qualifications. This was to intense bullying in school, which resulted in him being absent from taking his GCSE exams – despite him being predicted to attain A\* in most subjects. The bullying added to the stress of not taking his GCSE exams and this lead to Nicholas suffering from mental health issues. Voluntary work helped him gain some confidence and gave him a focus in life to help him manage his depression.

Through the Impact programme, Nicholas was invited to the Walsall Works Expo and was given guidance by his advisor about the types of opportunities available. He met with Impact’s Employer Engagement Officer who immediately identified an Apprenticeship role with KBS in Business Admin. After detailing the job, the company and the opportunities involved, Nicholas was keen to apply and thanks to the close working relationship with KBS, the EEO was able to talk to their manage about Nicholas’ story rather than just sending through a CV that had no qualifications or work experience. An interview was arranged for the next week.

The interview went well and Nicholas was keen to impress his potential new employer so he agreed to undertake a week’s work trial that took place the week leading up to the Easter break. KBS were delighted with Nicholas and at the end of the work trial offered him the job. However, the role was part business/sales support to customers that was desk bound and part going down stairs to pack and stock take items for shipping. Nicholas suffers with a back problem, which is exacerbated by climbing up and down stairs so he felt that he would have to decline the job offer, which he did. He left at the end of the work trial.

As the managers of KBS were so impressed with Nicholas during his work trial and did not want to lose him, they adapted the role and offered him a desk-bound role, which would not include him working in the warehouse and thus not climbing up and down stairs. He has since progressed well with KBS and has been described as a real asset to the team; this includes now taking responsibility for the company's digital marketing duties.

## Walsall Council Equality and Diversity Information

### Directorate Report December 2019

Directorate	Resources and Transformation
Executive Director	James Walsh
Contact officer	Rebecca Wassell
E-mail	<a href="mailto:Rebecca.Wassell@walsall.gov.uk">Rebecca.Wassell@walsall.gov.uk</a>

### Corporate Equality Objectives

Our equality objectives are based on available equalities information through research, consultation, engagement, and Equality Impact Assessments. They help identify internal and external targets that will enable the Council to improve the collection of equality information, and address the most persistent areas of inequalities faced by both employees and customers:

We will:-

- Promote inclusion and commit to understanding the individual experience throughout our work;
- Engage and empower local communities to resolve equality issues;
- Strive to have a diverse workforce at all levels;
- Treat people and agencies that we work with, fairly, justly and with respect, by being open, inclusive and collaborative;
- Find ways to support those who are disadvantaged or excluded.

### Equality Act 2012 Protected Characteristics

Protected characteristics are the grounds upon which discrimination is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010;

Age	Race
Disability	Religion and belief
Gender reassignment	Sex
Marriage and civil partnership	Sexual orientation
Pregnancy and maternity	

## Part 1 Main strategies and plans containing equality and diversity information

Title	Purpose	Availability	
		On request	Internet address
Corporate Workforce Strategy 2018-2021 “Proud in Growing Together”	The Strategy recognises that the workforce are the Council’s greatest asset and identifies the importance of attracting and retaining a highly talented and diverse workforce. The strategy outlines the Council’s vision, priorities, values and behaviours and set’s out a number of key actions, including a number related to equality and diversity, in order to support the development of the workforce to ensure that it is fit for the challenges and transformational change that lies ahead.	✓	<a href="http://int.walsall.gov.uk/Portals/0/HR/63447%20Corporate%20Workforce%20Strategy%202018-2021.pdf">http://int.walsall.gov.uk/Portals/0/HR/63447%20Corporate%20Workforce%20Strategy%202018-2021.pdf</a>  <a href="https://go.walsall.gov.uk/corporate-plan">https://go.walsall.gov.uk/corporate-plan</a>
Employment Monitoring Report (EMR) is published annually and includes the Council’s Gender Pay Gap Report	The EMR provides a statistical overview of the Council’s workforce and provides in-depth analysis based on a number of protected characteristics. The report provides data, which monitors pay grades, recruitment, employee relations matters, broken down by equality monitoring measures, identifying trends and demographic comparisons to inform future decision-making and support the Council to promote and maintain a diverse workforce.	✓	<a href="http://int.walsall.gov.uk/Human_Resources/Employment_Manual/Employee_Support/Employment_Monitoring">http://int.walsall.gov.uk/Human_Resources/Employment_Manual/Employee_Support/Employment_Monitoring</a>  <a href="https://go.walsall.gov.uk/Portals/0/Uploads/EQD/docs/Corporate%20Employment%20Monitoring%20Report%202017_18.pdf">https://go.walsall.gov.uk/Portals/0/Uploads/EQD/docs/Corporate%20Employment%20Monitoring%20Report%202017_18.pdf</a>
Pay Policy Statement (published annually)	The Pay Policy Statement is an annual statement that sets out the Council’s policy in relation to pay levels and conditions of service for all employees, in doing so it formalises our equal and consistent	✓	<a href="http://int.walsall.gov.uk/human_resources/employment_manual/Pay_allowance_and_benefits/pay_policy_statements">http://int.walsall.gov.uk/human_resources/employment_manual/Pay_allowance_and_benefits/pay_policy_statements</a>

	approach to a number of pay related decisions ensuring fairness and equality for all recipients.		
Human Resources (HR) manages a portfolio of corporate employment policies, procedures and guidance, of which equalities and diversity are a key aim and focus, in particular some specific policies have at their core the equalities agenda e.g. Job Evaluation and Grading Policy, Dignity at Work Policy.	All employment policies are developed in line with equality and diversity principles and aim to ensure that discrimination of any form against employees with protected characteristics is not tolerated. Policies also include reminders to managers on reasonable adjustments and can be provided in alternative formats where required.	✓	<a href="http://int.walsall.gov.uk/Human_Resources/HR_A-Z_Directory_of_HR_policies_and_procedures">http://int.walsall.gov.uk/Human_Resources/HR_A-Z_Directory_of_HR_policies_and_procedures</a>
<b>Localities and Partnerships</b>			
Community Safety Plan	Is to set out Walsall partnership vision to tackle and support communities on violence, substance misuse, crime prevention and reduction. The plan utilises the safer Walsall partnership board's most recent information and intelligence and sets out what all partners will focus upon. The plan is updated annually.	✓	
Community Asset Transfer Policy	The process by which a public body, such as a local Council, transfers ownership or management of a physical asset (such as land or buildings) to a community organisation (such as a community group or charity) at less than market value in order to achieve local social, economic and environmental benefits. For Walsall, the transfer will be in the form of lease for a specified amount of time at less than the market value.		<a href="https://go.walsall.gov.uk/business/land_for_sale_shops_to_rent_asset_management/community_asset_transfer">https://go.walsall.gov.uk/business/land_for_sale_shops_to_rent_asset_management/community_asset_transfer</a>

Strategic Locality Partnership Boards	Four Localities where multi agency professionals work together to support the vulnerable. There will also be a strategic element where we work with representatives of the partner agencies and community leaders to develop community engagement and create a Locality Plan.	✓	
Equality Objectives	This report details our equality objectives and information on issues the people of Walsall and Walsall Council employees face.		<a href="https://go.walsall.gov.uk/Portals/0/Uploads/Equality%20Objectives%20and%20Information%20Jan%202019.docx">https://go.walsall.gov.uk/Portals/0/Uploads/Equality%20Objectives%20and%20Information%20Jan%202019.docx</a>
Equality Protocol	Outlines the aims, expectations and practices required from our Councillors, managers, employees, workers and partners in relation to equality and diversity. It is the equality view of Walsall Council.	✓	

## Part 2 Equality Impact Assessments November 2018 to October 2019

Service	Title	Contact officer name
Human Resources	Social Media Policy	Nic Rickhuss
Human Resources	Probation Policy	Nic Rickhuss
Human Resources	DBS Policy	Nic Rickhuss
Human Resources	Clear Desk and Screen Policy	Nic Rickhuss
Human Resources	Fixed Term and Temporary Contracts Policy	Nic Rickhuss
Human Resources	Right to Request Flexible Working Policy	Nic Rickhuss
Human Resources	Grievance Policy	Nic Rickhuss
Human Resources	Collective Grievance Policy	Nic Rickhuss
Human Resources	Dignity at Work Policy	Nic Rickhuss
Human Resources	Disciplinary Policy	Nic Rickhuss
Human Resources	Appeals Policy	Nic Rickhuss
Human Resources	Confidential Reporting (Whistleblowing) Policy	Nic Rickhuss
Human Resources	Pay Policy Statement 2019/20	Nic Rickhuss
Human Resources	Unattached Teachers Pay Policy 2019/20	Nic Rickhuss

Equality and Diversity	Interpretation, Translation, Transcription and Easy Read Contract	Brian Fitzgerald
Equality and Diversity	Equality Protocol	Brian Fitzgerald
Equality and Diversity	Equality Objectives	Brian Fitzgerald
Human Resources	Sickness Absence Policy	Nic Rickhuss
Human Resources	Job Evaluation and Grading Policy	Nic Rickhuss
Human Resources	Appeals Policy for NJC/Hay Job Evaluation	Nic Rickhuss
Human Resources	Family Friendly Policy	Nic Rickhuss
Human Resources	Gifts and Hospitality Policy	Nic Rickhuss
Human Resources	Code of Conduct for Employees	Nic Rickhuss
Human Resources	Market Supplements Policy	Nic Rickhuss
Human Resources	Performance and Ill Health Capability Policy	Nic Rickhuss
Community Safety Team	Community Safety Plan	Helen Kindon
Localities and Partnerships	Community Asset Transfer Policy	Helen Kindon
Localities and Partnerships	Modern Slavery Human Trafficking	Helen Kindon
Equality and Diversity	Sign Language Cafes	Brian Fitzgerald
Money Home Job (MHJ)	Walsall Draft Allocations Policy 2019	Neil Hollyhead
ICT	Microsoft Licensing Agreement	Sharon Worrall

Legal Services	Commercial Team Review	Stuart Portman
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## Part 3 Equality and Diversity Objectives

### 1. We will promote inclusion and commit to understanding the individual experience throughout our work

#### Finance

Financial administration engages with the public in its day-to-day activities and seeks to do so in a way most appropriate to individual needs. Finance also deals directly with suppliers, businesses, members of the public, service users, carers, and other organisations. In addition, the Service looks to communicate and liaise with these via a variety of means, the main purpose of which is seek to address demand in a way that best suits the individuals' requirements.

#### HR

The Corporate Workforce Strategy (2018-2021) recognises that the workforce are the Council's greatest asset and identifies the importance of attracting and retaining a highly talented and diverse workforce. The strategy outlines the Council's vision, priorities, values and behaviours and set's out a number of key actions, including a number related to equality and diversity, as outlined below;

- A specific equality and diversity pledge (resulting from the 2017 employee survey) "We will strive to build a workforce which is reflective of the community we serve";
- Unconscious bias training (employees and members);
- Expansion of apprenticeship scheme (302 in 2019);
- Introduction of national graduate scheme;
- Active engagement with local communities regarding job opportunities and at local jobs fairs;
- Intercultural awareness training;
- Proud Manager leadership development programme (module 7 – Equality and Diversity);
- Mentoring and Coaching;
- Thrive at work health and wellbeing offer;
- Mental health training for managers;
- Mental health first aiders;
- Talent management system;
- Induction and supervision redesign;
- Annual Performance Conversation redesign;
- Workforce policy development including the introduction of a new Dignity at Work Policy and a review of the Job Evaluation and Grading Policy both with a strong equality and diversity purpose.

Inclusion and equality is promoted through all of our employment policies and these are normally reviewed on a three yearly cycle, see objective 4 for a further breakdown of these.

Recruitability in HR – 3 placements

Work Experience in HR – Nil (we have not had an offer previously – we will be offering placements for Jan-December 2020)

### Integrated Facilities Management (IFM)

IFM works with community associations across Walsall undertaking repairs and maintenance works to various building. Some small projects have been included to improve these facilities including toilet improvements, heating controls and general area improvements to the buildings.

### Housing Standards

The service has employed 3 disabled officers through this initiative in 2019/20 and all have progressed into full time roles with the Council. Phil Cox, who has secured a Housing Caseworker role, has also been recognised by the national charity Foundations for his excellent work helping vulnerable disabled people with their adaptation schemes. Another officer has been successfully administering the ECO Flex scheme mentioned above that has had over 1,300 registrations. The scheme is being extended in 2020, in order to recruit another 2 officers.

### Community, Equality and Cohesion

Within the Community, Equality and Cohesion section, we oversee the corporate Consultation and Equalities function. The role of this advisory service is to ensure the Council's compliance with Equality Act and related legislation. This service coordinates Corporate Equality Group meetings and agendas with the Chief Executive's office, engages with Trade Unions and Equality Champions. As part of this role, we publicise the Council's achievements under the PSED and oversee the implementation of the Equalities Protocol.

We promote inclusion in the corporate training that was reviewed in 2018/2019. It now includes a number of different methods of learning, from online e-learning modules focused on legal knowledge and management application of equality and diversity to practical courses, such as the Equally Yours board game, where an interactive board game is used in a group environment to raise awareness and tackle potential bias or prejudice.

This has been a very popular approach to learning, where personal experience is used as a starting point, and the Game has been delivered by many Council services key to equitable delivery to customers. Indeed, this game has been presented at bespoke Member training events and at Corporate Management Team (CMT), which is chaired by the Chief Executive.

Since September 2019, the Service has supported the Council's Learning and Development team in providing new Unconscious Bias and Inter-cultural training, both of which are aimed at managers and front line staff. Run by brap, a Birmingham based training, research and community engagement consultancy and UK CEE Dialogue Centre, an international community interest company, the training looks to provide delegates with different perspectives on diversity and equality, as well as an appreciation of their own personal experiences and biases.

### Localities

Key priorities for Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking existing within the Community Safety Plan: This has led to the development of a delivery model of excellence for modern slavery and human trafficking, in order to meet the Modern Slavery Act 2015 statutory requirements. This includes operational pathways, pursuance, disruption and awareness.

Key priorities for Prevent exist within the Contest Delivery Plan and Prevent Delivery Plan, which, in turn, is driven by the Counter Terrorism Local Profile (CTLTP) – Walsall.

#### Walsall Proud Programme

The objective for the Walsall Proud Programme is to ensure that the customer is at the heart of the work we do and the services we provide. Recognising the diverse nature of the Council's service user activity is supported with EqlAs, to ensure that appropriate considerations and necessary adaptations are designed into the new ways of working.

User experience events, where a range of service users were asked to provide their views and feedback on digital ways of working has already commenced. Compliance with digital work, such as the web site, also involves regular engagement with citizens.

#### Information and communications technology (ICT), Print and Design and Schools IT Traded Service

ICT, Print and Design and Schools IT traded service all work with services within the Council and external customers to support them in the delivery of and use of most appropriate technology solutions to ensure that equality and diversity objectives are met. Print and Design and IT will always consider the format and colour usage for presentation material and the web site is compliant with the latest legislation.

#### Assurance Team (Communication, Consultation, Statutory, Corporate and Local Government Ombudsman Complaints, Information Rights (including Subject Access requests), Freedom of Information (FOI) and Environmental Information Regulation (EIR) requests, Corporate Strategy and Performance

The work of the Assurance team focusses on enabling everyone to have a voice and/or to access the information they require as allowed by legislation. The role is to make the function as accessible as possible and to assist, as much as possible, all customers, such as via face to face, telephone or web.

Communication colleagues work with services and support them in identifying the most appropriate method of communications to reach intended targeted groups including print publications, press releases and social media platforms. Pivotal to the approach is PACMAN, standing for Purpose, Audience, Communication, Measurement, Assessment and Next steps. This ensures that the development of communication campaigns and messages takes into account the purpose of the message and who, specifically, the audience is.

This informs the selection of the most appropriate communication channel and assists how success will be measured (e.g. number of likes or shares), assesses the success of the campaign and then decides on next steps. During this process, the identification of specific communities and the best channels to communicate with them is key to the success of the campaign and ensuring inclusivity.

#### Legal and Democratic Services

Legal and Democratic services engages with the public in their day-to-day activities and seeks to do so in a way most appropriate to individual needs. The service also deals directly with suppliers, businesses, members of the public, service users, carers and other

organisations, as well as communicates and liaises with these via a variety of means, to seek to address demand in a way that best suits an individual's requirements.

#### Procurement

Equality is one of the core principles of public sector procurement and is a core component of procurement practice and procedure within Walsall Council. All services requiring procurement, from the point of service design factor inclusion and individual experience into service specification design. The procurement process includes check to ensure that service user consultation, engagement and Equality Impact Assessments have been undertaken to inform service specification design

## **2. We will engage and empower local communities to resolve equality issues**

#### Finance

Finance engages with the public when undertaking consultation work on proposed budget savings. This enables the public to give views on changes that may affect specific category groups i.e. aged and disabled persons and to feed in their views generally on the budget. The results are analysed and published on the Council's website. Financial administration also engages with the public in their day-to-day activities and seeks to do so in a way most appropriate to individual needs.

#### HR

The Learning and Development team provides and promote a portfolio of learning and development opportunities, internally and through externally commissioned providers specifically related to promoting and resolving equality issues, some of this training is provided Council wide, some specifically to those employees working within the Adult Social Care sector and some externally, and include;

- Caring for me and you
- Suicide prevention
- Sexual exploitation
- Autism awareness (co-delivered by an expert by experience)
- Dementia awareness
- Domestic violence and adult safeguarding
- Carers support and information
- Coercive control, stalking and harassment
- Conflict resolution
- Deaf awareness
- Modern slavery and human trafficking
- Falls prevention
- Intercultural awareness
- Unconscious Bias
- Mental Health First Aid
- Stress awareness
- Safeguarding awareness – children and vulnerable adults

The Council's recruitment team actively engagement with local communities regarding the promotion of job opportunities and attend a number of local jobs fairs providing advice and guidance to the community. The team promotes the Council's recruitability programme, which provides work placement opportunities for individuals with disabilities and which provides them with valuable experience, helping them to integrate into work, either with the Council or other external companies and agencies.

#### Community, Equality and Cohesion

As part of our role in assuring the Council's compliance with EqlAs, we often advise on how to consult directly with people possessing protected characteristics, ranging from those with sensory needs to LGBTQ communities, black and ethnic minorities or refugees, migrants and new communities. Based on our identification of local needs, the Council has been successful in obtaining funding for Integration Area Programme publicised as Walsall for All. The website possesses an accessibility function, allowing access to information for people with disabilities.



The vision of the Programme is to create integrated, empowered and inclusive communities where people from all backgrounds come together to celebrate what they have in common. A place where our residents are safe and valued, and everyone has fair opportunities to fulfil their potential and contribute to the growth of Walsall.

The programme consists of four priorities and each of those include empowering local communities to resolve equality issues, by direct engagement and through supporting local projects. The range of funded local projects, upcoming events and achieved case studies can be accessed on the Walsall for All website and through a periodic newsletter (<https://www.walsallforall.co.uk/newsletter>).

Community Dialogue (<https://www.walsallforall.co.uk/community-dialogue>) is a major project under Walsall for All. A Faith and Belief Forum has been appointed to carry out this work. Community dialogue events will create safe spaces for local people to engage in conversations about the things that are important to them. The programme aims to bring together the voices of local people to discuss identity, diversity and living together. The programme also seeks to give opportunity for local people to have their voices and stories heard and connect with others across Walsall.

There is a wide variety of community organisations within Walsall. These range from large community associations ([https://go.walsall.gov.uk/community\\_development](https://go.walsall.gov.uk/community_development)), who offer an array of services and activities for all ages of the community, to small groups who work with a specific age group or deliver a particular activity.

Often residents feel more comfortable asking for advice and guidance from community staff/volunteers rather than officers. The majority of community organisations have adopted an equal opportunities policy, which their board of trustees has approved. The Community Network meets regularly and is an opportunity to share any equality issues and resolve concerns.

The Equality and Diversity team is also a representative on the Walsall Disability Forum. The network meets quarterly to discuss the current landscape around disability and identifies how organisations and individuals can work together to provide solution based approaches to the challenges facing the sector.

Walsall Council will mark Holocaust Memorial Day, 27 January, each year with a memorial event. An event took place at St. Paul's The Crossing Church, where a number of dignitaries and Faith representatives met to mark the day.

### LOCALITIES

The Localities and Partnership and Community Safety teams work with a diverse mix within our communities and engage with our communities on a regular basis to highlight and mitigate equality issues:-

- Locality Model;
- Community Safety Plan;
- Modern Slavery Human Trafficking – Walsall Council recognise that it has a responsibility to take a robust approach to modern slavery and human trafficking and its aim is to make Walsall hostile to slavery and provide the best possible support for potential victims;
- Community Asset Transfer Policy;
- Supporting Victims;
- Safeguarding/Prevent;
- Contest Delivery Plan;
- Prevent Delivery Plan.

### Walsall Proud Programme

As a result of close partnership working with the Council's Equality and Diversity team, as well as with the specific service areas going through transformational change, the Proud Programme has witnessed community consultation becoming part of the whole process.

There is an opportunity for regular and ongoing dialogue about the changes the Council is proposing and how the voice of the customer is captured and used to influence service delivery.

### ICT, Print and Design and Schools' IT Traded Service

All corporate consultation activity is managed centrally and outcomes presented to elected members and used to inform decision-making. As part of the consultation process services

are increasingly encouraged to record protected characteristics and to ensure full consideration is given regarding the design of the consultation and ensuring all of community including hard to reach groups have opportunity to participate.

Assurance Team (Communication, Consultation, Statutory, Corporate and Local Government Ombudsman Complaints, Information Rights (including Subject Access requests), Freedom of Information (FOI) and Environmental Information Regulation (EIR) requests, Corporate Strategy and Performance

Walsall Council's Media and Communications team has a well-established social media presence. It has supported the promotion and communication of a wide range of community and partner led events and activities that recognise and celebrate the borough's diverse communities. In the last year, the team has also launched the Walsall Newsroom making news and information available quickly and easily via the Council's website (<https://go.walsall.gov.uk/newsroom>).

Communications regarding service specific budget consultation is one example of this. In supporting services in the designing of messages and campaigns, accessibility to all groups is considered. Corporate consultation activity is managed centrally and outcomes are presented to elected members and used to inform decision making about Council services.

As part of the consultation process services are increasingly encouraged to record protected characteristics and to ensure full consideration is given regarding the design of the consultation and ensuring all of community including hard to reach groups have opportunity to participate.

Legal and Democratic Services

Through the Democratic Services team, we facilitate members of the public in raising issues in Council meetings through the application of the petition scheme, and the questions to Elected Members. On occasions we have of dealt with equalities issues in terms of Muslim burials. This help promote inclusion. All Council meetings are open to members of the public unless there are issues of confidentiality. We also assist elected members in tabling motions to Council that deal with issues of inclusion.

We also promote inclusion in managing Council decision making in an open and transparent manner. This includes ensuring all relevant information is contained in reports to enable informed decisions to be made regarding fair delivery services and allocation of resources.

### **3. We will strive to have a diverse workforce at all levels**

Finance

Finance adheres to all corporate activity and policies. Training towards a professional qualification is available to staff, subject to pre-determined criteria for CCAB, AAT and other suitable finance related qualifications, This training ensures that all employees will be treated fairly and equally in considering learning and development provision.

Employees with equal priority or equal need for learning and development will be given the same or equivalent learning opportunities. Resources will not be allocated on a “first come first served” basis, but will be prioritised against the relative requirements of a range of staff and their work area.

Everyone within Finance who possesses a professional qualification must maintain continuous membership of their financial body and must actively participate in continuous professional development.

Finance staff have the opportunity to develop their core skills by attending internal finance “bite size” sessions on key financial topics and new developments. Finance has a ‘buddy system’ for trainees. The Training Manager allocates a “buddy” to every student when his or her studies commence. Students are entitled to a buddy irrespective of age, race, religion, ethnicity, disability; gender etc and the policy will be applied to ensure all areas of equality are met. This person will either be a student themselves or a newly qualified member of staff.

Finance also has a mentoring scheme, provided for each student with the mentor being a qualified accountant within the organisation. HR provides training for all mentors. However, it is envisaged that the role of the mentor will be that of critical friend or supportive colleague rather than the mentor having to have any specific skills or knowledge in the area of counselling or coaching skills.

Equality and diversity is embedded within our staff training programmes. Our recruitment policy ensures that candidates will be treated fairly and equally, and will be scored against specifications of the job role. Lead interviewers must be trained in Recruitment and Selection, ensuring an approach in accordance with legislation. Equality and Diversity is a standing agenda item on team meetings.

## HR

The annual Employment Monitoring Report (EMR) provides a statistical overview of the Council’s workforce and provides in-depth analysis based on a number of protected characteristics. The report provides data, which monitors pay grades, recruitment, employee relations matters, broken down by equality monitoring measures, identifying trends and demographic comparisons to inform future decision-making and support the Council to promote and maintain a diverse workforce.

In addition to the annual EMR, HR also produce a quarterly Management Dashboard that provides further in-depth analysis of workforce and equalities data and subsequently works with directorates to interpret, analyse and devise action plans as necessary in support of both corporate and individual directorates equality objectives.

In addition to the priorities contained in the workforce strategy (see objective 1) which also relate to this objective, HR promote, support and contribute to this objective through a number of other employment policies, practices, principles and training including;

- All recruitment and selection (R&S) activity must be conducted by at least one person who has received the Council’s R&S training which includes a dedicated equalities module;
- The R&S policy advises that the diversity representation of any R&S panel should be given due consideration;

- All R&S activity should be undertaken in accordance with the Council's equalities and diversity protocol;
- Job evaluation checks must be performed to confirm fair, equal and consistent grading of all posts prior to recruitment;
- All job adverts must contain an equality and diversity statement and/or appropriate logo;
- Disability confident employer, guaranteeing all applicants who self-declare a disability an interview if they can demonstrate they meet the minimum shortlisting criteria
- Recruitability placements for individuals who have a disability;
- Safer recruitment practices are promoted through the R&S process helping to safeguarding the young and vulnerable in our communities;
- Promotion of work placements schemes for inexperienced workers/students/citizens
- The R&S policy allows for positive action decisions to be taken to support diversity in the workforce;
- Ensuring equality is a key feature in the suite of HR policies recently developed and the implementation of all of them remind managers of the requirements to offer reasonable adjustments as appropriate.

The Pay Policy Statement is an annual statement that sets out the Council's policy in relation to pay levels and conditions of service for all employees. In doing so, it formalises our equal and consistent approach to a variety of pay related decisions, ensuring fairness and equality for all recipients and ensuring that matters of pay and conditions are not affected by discrimination in any form. The Council's Pay Policy also reaffirms the Council's commitment to being a real living wage employer each year.

The Council also produce an annual Gender Pay Gap Report, which shows the difference between the average earnings of men and women at the Council expressed as a percentage. The currently published gender pay gap (based on data as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019) shows a reduced gender pay gap of 9.8% compared with 12.69% the previous year. In addition to measuring the Council's gender pay gap, a gender pay gap action plan is also developed and monitored in order to identify and address as appropriate any equality issues.

The Council currently operates a self-service portal 'People Gateway', which provides employees with the opportunity to update their personal and sensitive data in order to support the Council's ability to capture, monitor and report on employment and equalities data.

The Council is currently implementing a new integrated HR/Payroll/Finance system, which is expected to provide more comprehensive workforce analytics including recruitment, development and equalities data. The self-service provision is also expected to be more intuitive and user-friendly encouraging more employee self-service and better management information promoting increased equalities monitoring and improved local management action planning.

The Learning and Development team supports manager and employee development around issues of equality and diversity issues by offering a range of classroom and e-learning opportunities;

- Introduction to equality and diversity;
- Equality and diversity legislation;
- Equality and diversity training;

- Mental Health First Aid;
- Mental Health First Aid for managers;
- Display Screen Equipment assessments;
- Assertiveness and resilience;
- Stress Awareness;
- Unconscious Bias;
- Intercultural Awareness;
- Proud Manager Programme contains with a specific module on equalities and diversity;
- Recruitment and selection training with a specific module on equalities and diversity.

### IFM

IFM has 2 apprentices from within a 10 miles radius of Walsall, one technical post and 1 administration post. We are actively encouraging staff to upskill through the various mediums available to the Council. We actively encourage our supply chain network to use local labour sources including apprenticeships and to recruit through the local community wherever possible.

### Community, Equality and Cohesion

The Community, Equality and Cohesion team supports initiatives to ensure the Council's workforce is diverse and this is seen in a number of key areas;

#### Work Experience

The Community, Equality and Cohesion team is creating opportunities to allow individuals to access exciting work experience positions, particularly for those with barriers to employment. In 2018/2019, the team hosted 2 work experience placements. The first work experience enabled a mature parent with English as a Second Language to reintegrate into a workplace, by providing her with a package of work experience opportunities suitable for the degree she obtained abroad, as well as with supporting the requirement for her to have flexible hours in her placement.

This work experience programme has progressed to an individual achieving an apprenticeship within the Community Cohesion team. Indeed, this has provided the post with a chance of permanent employment. The job occupant has greatly improved standards of their professional use of English language, but also brought with them accountancy, multilingual and business administrative skills. She won the Council's Apprenticeship of the Year award,

(<https://www.facebook.com/WalsallApps/photos/a.2103043819933288/2392649524306048/?type=3&theater>) and is currently leading on engagement and consultations with 'seldom heard' communities, including women. You can read her case study at;

<https://go.walsall.gov.uk/Portals/0/Uploads/HR/Marianna%20Solodcaia.pdf?fbclid=IwAR0fzNvLyOzf-3Cq97qv8xO6BUvsMKuOPYkBEqpdtXSNVB0nrQpeiFYP0is>



A student with Afro-Caribbean heritage took up the second work experience placement and they advised us on our communication strategy for the Walsall for All programme. The student was not only able to share their cultural insight into some of the initiatives in Walsall, but they gained better understanding of working for a larger organisation, networking with voluntary and charity sector and preparing them for a world of work.

### Apprenticeships

As part of the Walsall for All Programme, we created three apprenticeships positions under the employment banner 'Apprenticeships for young people and those with barriers to employment'. Two of these positions were in the area of business administration and the other one in the area of project management.



### Direct Employment and Procurement

The Service has made impressive strides in working with young people, through charitable, voluntary and small/medium enterprises. Through the Walsall for All Programme, we have worked very closely with the Youth of Walsall voluntary organisation and have created an opportunity for their communication officers to create our Walsall for All marketing and publicity strategy, including the website, which is now managed by a small company set up by young people.

As part of our Walsall for All Strategy, ([https://c9eb4d58-827e-44f3-ab8f-76e5899c8a33.filesusr.com/ugd/ffd8a6\\_0f6ab95a53e4458cb1d320de074841b1.pdf](https://c9eb4d58-827e-44f3-ab8f-76e5899c8a33.filesusr.com/ugd/ffd8a6_0f6ab95a53e4458cb1d320de074841b1.pdf))

the Community, Equality and Cohesion team has procured a number of projects that target employment and engagement of people with protected characteristics including:

- Community Practitioner Researchers – enabling people from different backgrounds to gain research qualification whilst helping to gather qualitative data about our communities;
- National Citizens' Service, Prince's Trust and Uniformed Youth Groups – raising aspirations of young people into meaningful employment/business;
- National Youth Agency – organising consultations with young people and sharing local policies;
- Walsall Works – embedding integration, diversity and equality in Walsall Works Partner Awards categories.

### Localities

This Service seeks to achieve compliance with this objective through raising awareness and by regularly refreshing people's knowledge and understanding.

The training session, called WRAP (Workshop to Raise Awareness about PREVENT), is a Home Office initiative that was delivered so that we could play our part in stopping individuals becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. The training improves the understanding of the processes used by those who radicalise individuals and ensures that staff are aware of whom to contact within their organisation to discuss any concerns.

### Walsall Proud Programme

The Proud Programme works closely with the business areas to design and develop the approach to implementing service change and delivery. Through support services such as HR, Finance, Legal and Procurement, workforce change activity is built into the programme of change.

The key objectives for Proud are – better customer experience, increased employee satisfaction and engagement and improve service efficiency and performance.

### ICT Print and Design and Schools' IT Traded Service

Recruitment in ICT, Print and Design and the Schools IT Traded Service operates within the Council's recruitment process and procedures, which support equality and diversity.

The teams adhere to Council policies in its recruitment of staff. The service has participated in placement initiatives such as the Council's Recruitability scheme through which we have currently have one person on placement with the Applications Support and Development team in ICT.

An awareness of and an ability to ensure that we follow the principles of the Equality Act 2010, when performing our duties, are written into our job specifications and are embedded within the recruitment and selection process.

This service actively seek to develop all employees by regularly offering development opportunities to work in other teams in ICT removing barriers and making reasonable adjustments where possible.

ICT, Print and Design and the Schools IT Traded Service are all support services and they often have people of all ages and all stages of their careers on work experiences for example students still at school, university students, young people released from the care system and others considering a new career.

Reasonable adjustments are recommended from a variety of sources, such as following a DSE assessment, an Access to work assessment, a risk assessment or an Occupational Health report following a referral.

ICT, Print and Design and the Schools IT Traded Service use technology to assist some staff and students to work flexibly, for example, to work from home to suit their individual needs. ICT respond to requests for IT adjustments for users on a case-by-case basis and work with the user and appropriate manager to find a solution where possible, such as provision of specialist computers for employees with particular visual or hearing requirements.

ICT has a number of staff undertaking apprenticeships from within a 12-mile radius of Walsall, at a number of different grades. We actively encourage staff to upskill through various channels and openly encourage ongoing training.

ICT also has placements for Student Internships. This is the third year ICT have offered placements to University of Wolverhampton students studying ICT degrees.

Data Protection Awareness and Refresher Training, designed and monitored by the Information Governance team is mandatory training, made accessible to all by providing the training in a range of formats, including online, paper and an Easy read version. The online version also included a number of options to increase audio and visual accessibility. The online training modules are refreshed and updated annually and are made available via all devices and all networks for access from any device at any time and any location. 95% of all staff complete this training on an annual basis.

Assurance Team (Communication, Consultation, Statutory, Corporate and Local Government Ombudsman Complaints, Information Rights (including Subject Access requests), Freedom of Information (FOI) and Environmental Information Regulation (EIR) requests, Corporate Strategy and Performance

The Communications team follows media protocols, which respect and promote diversity in the community. It promotes Council initiatives that encourage equality and diversity in the borough. Through our consultation team, we capture and analyse service user data and feedback through numerous tools and techniques. This insight is used to help inform service design for the future.

Assurance Officers have regular contact with members of the public, processing complaints and requests for information governed by Data Protection Freedom of Information and Environmental Impact Regulation legislation. The team are accustomed to handling sensitive information during the course of their work and ensuring legislation guiding the rights of individuals are adhered to. The Council publishes information regarding Individual Rights.

The Assurance team adheres to Council policies in its recruitment of staff. The service has participated in Council work experience and placement initiatives such as the Council's

Recruitability scheme through which we have nurtured and supported staff with a disability to gain skills, which have led to permanent positions within the team.

An awareness of and an ability to ensure that we follow the principles of the Equality Act 2010 when performing our duties are written into our job specifications and are embedded within the recruitment and selection process.

The communications team support the Council's recruitment team will all recruitment via the sharing and promotion of vacancies using corporate communication channels to extend potential reach.

#### Legal and Democratic Services

Legal and Democratic Services adheres to all corporate activity and policies as applicable to equality and diversity. All employees have training in accordance with identified need as part of the APC process. In addition, all qualified legal staff are required to undertake annual CPD accredited training. All employees are treated fairly and equally in considering learning and development opportunity. Employees with equal priority or equal need for learning and development will be given the same or equivalent learning opportunities.

Equality and diversity is embedded within our staff training programmes. Our recruitment policy ensures that candidates will be treated fairly and equally, and will be scored against specifications of the job role. Lead interviewers must be trained in Recruitment and Selection, ensuring an approach in accordance with legislation. Equality and Diversity is a standing agenda item on monthly team meetings.

On the 6<sup>th</sup> September 2019 all managers across Legal And Democratic Services attended a specific half day training event run by the Council's Equality and Diversity Officer, Brian Fitzgerald, called "Equally Yours" to raise awareness of equality and diversity issues. In addition, members of the management team have attended the Unconscious Bias training offered by the Council, which was delivered by external trainers from the Birmingham based organisation brap.

#### Procurement

Appropriate and tailored support is made available where required to address any access issues that may occur.

### **4. We will treat people and agencies that we work with, fairly, justly and with respect, by being open, inclusive and collaborative**

#### Finance

Equality and diversity is embedded within our staff training programmes. Equality and Diversity is a standing agenda item on team meetings. The accountancy and associated teams are a support service, and therefore customers are generally internal. We attend various portfolio holder meetings / meet with external partners and address queries raised by internal and external parties. We are available for contact through a number of means (i.e. phone, email, in person) and respond in the required method of communication to address their needs. Financial administration deals directly with suppliers, businesses, members of the public, service users,

carers, and other organisations and it communicates and liaises with these via a variety of means, in order to seek to address demand in a way that best suits the individuals' requirements.

## HR

HR has recently procured the Council's new managed service provision, successfully appointing Starting Point Recruitment (SPR) as the Council's temporary agency worker provider (ongoing from April 2019). As part of this Contract, we have committed to work collaboratively with SPR to promote a number of social values that specifically support equalities and diversity, many of which are in support of those in local communities who are disadvantaged or excluded, see objective 5 for specific collaborative projects.

HR actively manage and monitor all of the Contracts it has with third party providers ensuring openness, transparency, trust and collaboration, regular contract monitoring meetings are held with health and wellbeing providers to ensure that the service is the best it can be and to continually improve the service delivery.

HR aims for all employment interactions to meet this objective by developing best practice employment policies and providing thorough, fair and consistent advice and comprehensive training to its managers. This year to date the following employment policies have been reviewed;

- Family friendly policy
- Right to request flexible working policy
- Code of conduct for employees
- Dignity at work policy
- Job evaluation and grading policy
- Appeals policy for NJC/Hay Job Evaluation
- Disciplinary policy
- Appeals policy
- Confidential reporting (whistleblowing) policy
- Market supplements policy
- Leave and time off policy
- DBS policy
- Grievance policy
- Collective Grievance policy
- Performance and ill health capability
- Sickness absence policy
- Probation policy
- Fixed term and temporary contracts policy
- Clear desk and screen policy
- Gifts and hospitality policy
- Social media policy
- Alcohol and drugs testing policy

There are also a number of further policies and/or guidance that have an equality and diversity impact, these include;

- Recruitment and selection, see objective 3 for further detail
- Substance misuse guidance
- Gender reassignment guidance

- Domestic abuse guidance
- Flexi-time scheme
- Agile working policy
- Annual leave purchase scheme

In addition to all of the above, this objective also contributes to the implementation of the Workforce Strategy, the detail of which has been previously covered in the first objective, 'We will promote inclusion and commit to understanding the individual experience throughout our work'.

### IFM

Currently Integrated Facilities Management work through a selection of procured contractors to deliver works using direct and a selection of local businesses. We are currently working through new arrangements and will continue to encourage use of Walsall Apprenticeship schemes to increase the employment statistic for Walsall people. All the contractors that were appointed were required to meet a minimum standard of Social values in line with Walsall Council's policies. All KPI's (Key Performance Indicators) are based on measurable outcomes via Customer Satisfaction forms. Suppliers are encouraged to use local supply chains for materials when delivering works within Walsall borough.

### Community, Equality and Cohesion

As part of our corporate Equality and Diversity function, the Community, Equality and Cohesion team oversees Walsall Council's compliance with the PSED ([https://go.walsall.gov.uk/equality\\_documents](https://go.walsall.gov.uk/equality_documents)).

We seek to ensure that our staff and managers implement agreed equality objectives and carry out EqlAs on all Council services or changes to them where there is the potential for impact on people with protected characteristics. As part of this process, services (included those that are procured through external providers) are asked to analyse their service user data and consultations, identifying gaps in provision. Action plans are required where adverse impact or potentially adverse impact is identified.

The Community, Equality and Cohesion team continues to promote accessible communication by provision of the new community languages, British Sign Language and easy read service, in the framework contract interpretation, translation and transcription and Easy Read (ITTE). Analysis of the Council's interpretation services determines a targeted approach to Walsall's communities. In 2017/18, it carried out annual analysis of different services and types of languages used and invited feedback from the directorates. The Asian languages, such as Urdu, Mirpuri as well as some Eastern European languages, including Polish, Romanian and Slovak continue to be used in Walsall alongside already established Punjabi and Gujarati. Indeed, 45 languages were requested in 2018/19, including new languages previously never requested.

The team provides guidance and checks quality of EqlAs that are focused on ensuring that residents and customers with protected characteristics have easy access to our services and are treated fairly. A number of service areas, including Community Safety, Clean and Green and Money, Home, Jobs benefited from a series of leaflets in 11 different languages aimed at people who are New to Walsall. Further dissemination of information about accessing Council services was achieved through Twitter and Facebook accounts of New to Walsall.

### Localities

As seen in the EQIA, entitled Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking, we have a delivery plan in Walsall, which ensures we meet our statutory duties under the Modern Slavery Act 2015 Section 43, 52 and 54. The Modern Slavery Act 2015 builds on the Modern Slavery Strategy published by the Coalition Government in 2014. Like the Serious and Organised Crime Strategy, it is based around the 4Ps framework of pursue, prevent, protect and prepare. Our delivery plan ensures that the 4P's strategy is followed. A transparency statement exists.

### Housing and Welfare Rights Service

We regularly monitor the protected characteristics across our contracted services on a quarterly basis, this enables us to work with our partners to ensure the services we offer are inclusive and work with partners to identify trends and opportunities to deliver holistic and value services.

The monitoring also gives an opportunity to look at any cultural barriers such as our work with Aven House, where we were able to look at dispersed options for BAME communities and with our CMF project bid, which highlighted a need for translation/interpretation services for Italian Asian communities accessing our services. Across some of our contracted services, we also have regular dialogue with our service users so we are able to ensure we can fully understand needs and aspirations. (Contracts include Housing First (for Homeless Rough Sleepers), Aven House and dispersed accommodation (for victims of Domestic Abuse), Housing for Young People (St Basils and Walsall Housing Group (WHG) Contracts).

### Walsall Proud Programme

Through the recruitment process, we are employing staff to work with the Proud Programme who are cognisant of the importance and impact, which equality and diversity has and to ensure that is maintained at the forefront of the work being designed. EqIAs form part of the change process. Working collaboratively with partners and organisations who are supporting the Council, the standards and processes the Council has developed are shared with partners to ensure alignment.

### ICT, Print and Design and Schools' IT Traded Service

Recruitment in ICT, Print and Design and the Schools IT Traded Service is in line with the Council's recruitment process and procedures, which support equality and diversity. Systems developed by ICT and Print and Design are made to be accessible and device independent, for example, text size, font, colour can be changed no matter what device is used.

ICT is working on and supporting the Proud Programme initiative in order to implement GDS (Government Digital Service) standards on all Walsall.gov.uk web pages. A number of service areas pages have been transitioned and they now adhere to GDS. These are now live. The next tranche of Services pages is underway. The process to transform the pages takes between five to eight weeks, depending on the number of pages required. ICT Resources, working closely with the subject matter experts in service areas, undertake this work. GDS standards include ease of use, accessibility standards text/fonts, simplicity, signposting, alternative text.

Assurance Team (Communication, Consultation, Statutory, Corporate and Local Government Ombudsman Complaints, Information Rights (including Subject Access requests), Freedom of Information (FOI) and Environmental Information Regulation (EIR) requests, Corporate Strategy and Performance

The communications team follows media protocols, which respect and promote diversity in the community. They promote Council initiatives that encourage equality and diversity in the borough. Through our consultation team, we capture and analyse service user data and feedback through numerous tools and techniques. This insight is then used to help inform service design for the future.

Assurance Officers have regular contact with members of the public, processing complaints and requests for information governed by Data Protection Freedom of Information and Environmental Impact Regulation legislation. The team are accustomed to handling sensitive information during the course of their work and ensuring legislation guiding the rights of individuals are adhered to. The Council publishes information regarding Individual Rights.

In considering complaints made via the corporate (Tell Us) and the online Contact Us forms, the service seeks to monitor complainants' age, gender, disability and ethnicity, ensuring that we take into consideration any potential barriers to receiving our service to ensure equality of opportunity in our service delivery.

Complaints may highlight particular concerns of residents and service users relating to aspects of the equalities framework – this might include concerns from residents concerning the service they have received, or the customer experience that they have had in dealing with our services. The service will act as advocate on behalf of complainants as required to ensure customers receive fair treatment.

Legal and Democratic Services

Equality and diversity is embedded within our staff training programmes, and management team meetings, where this is a standing agenda item on team meetings. In spite of being a support service, we have direct contact with external clients and we engage with those clients in the manner that best supports specific needs. All of the services make reasonable adjustments for clients with protected characteristics from arranging interpreters to assist people in court proceedings to assisting people in attending Council meetings. As a service, we deal directly with suppliers, businesses, members of the public, service users, carers and other organisations. As a result, we communicate and liaise with these via a variety of means, to seek to address demand in a way that best suits the individuals' requirements.

Procurement

Public Contract Regulations and procurement practice and procedure both ensure that all contract opportunities are openly advertised on European and/or National advertising platforms, so allowing the process to offer an equal opportunity. Procurement processes are designed in a manner that ensures transparent fair and equal treatment of any prospective bidders and ensure that bidders and those partaking in the procurement process are not disadvantaged or excluded as a result of direct or indirect barriers.

## 5. We will find ways to support those who are disadvantaged or excluded

### Finance

The accountancy and associated teams are a support service, and, therefore, customers are generally internal. We attend various portfolio holder meetings / meet with external partners and address queries raised by internal and external parties. We are available through a number of means (i.e. phone, email, in person) and respond in the required method of communication to address their needs.

Financial administration deals directly with suppliers, businesses, members of the public, service users, carers, and other organisations and communicates and liaises with these via a variety of means, to seek to address demand in a way that best suits the individuals' requirements.

As stated above, Finance engages with the public when undertaking consultation work on proposed budget savings. This enables the public to give views on changes that may affect specific category groups i.e. aged and disabled persons and to feed in their views generally on the budget. The results are analysed and published on the Council's website and mitigating actions taken as appropriate.

### HR

HR has recently procured the Council's new managed service provision, successfully appointing Starting Point Recruitment (SPR) as the Council's temporary agency worker provider (ongoing from April 2019). As part of this contract we have committed to work with SPR and vice versa on promoting social value across the borough and are now partnering with them on a number of initiatives to support those who are disadvantaged or excluded, these include;

- Development and delivery of a rolling programme of monthly events working with community associations and organisations to deliver content and programmes relevant to Walsall's communities, to include employability and mentoring;
- Hosting a minimum of 12 digital training workshops per year for Walsall residents, including usage of mobiles and PCs and how to identify relevant online Council resources;
- Hosting a customised Health and Wellbeing training workshop every three months for Walsall residents with customised training programmes offered;
- Attending and record the numbers of engagements with local residents via the Walsall Works Expo and other recruitment events;
- Holding a female only event called "Empowering Women", in association with One Walsall;
- The recruitment of at least one apprentice each year, either via the SPR Contract team, Head Office or supply chain;
- Supporting the journey to work model, which is for unemployed Walsall Residents to enable them to access employability support, provided by Steps to Work. The aim is to improve their chances of gaining employment through Starting Point Recruitment;
- Maintaining a portfolio of education providers in the Walsall area;
- Developing a Community Directory, to identify where there are social programmes for children, young people and families to attend in the Walsall area;
- Developing a Comprehensive directory (to be updated annually) to support residents staying in their home and manage their cost of living with the aim of helping to reduce homelessness;

- Supporting the Council's Employment and Skills team by collecting and collating data on reasons for unemployment and develop partnership working to enhance relationships, following successful registration;
- Supporting Steps to Work (STW) work in partnership with Walsall-based housing providers. Ensuring social housing providers are aware of the SPR services that we can offer to their residents;
- Attending and record the numbers of engagements with local residents via the local Walsall Works job clubs;
- Establishing an Improving Service Excellence group, which will drive the social values across the Walsall Borough.

The Council's Recruitment team actively engage local communities regarding the promotion of job opportunities and attend a number of local jobs fairs providing advice and guidance to the community. As well as engaging with the Walsall Disability Forum and promoting the Council's recruitability program which provides job placement opportunities for those with disabilities in order to provide them with valuable experience and help integrate them in to work either with the Council or subsequently other external companies / agencies.

The Learning and Development team operates a positive action scheme - a pre-apprenticeship programme for care leavers. This is designed to ensure appropriate mechanisms are in place to provide Walsall's care leavers with the best chance of securing an apprenticeship. It involves a period of work experience, impartial careers advice, pastoral support as necessary and support with making job applications/succeeding at interview. 18 apprenticeship posts are ring-fenced to care leavers as a practical demonstration of our corporate parenting responsibilities.

Additionally, the Learning and Development team offers a range of learning opportunities to equip the workforce with the skills and competencies to support those who may be disadvantaged in some way. Examples include Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking, Domestic Violence/Coercive Control, Stalking and Harassment and working with those who have physical or mental impairments and/or their carers.

### IFM

Appropriate support is offered to staff who need reasonable adjustments in understanding IFM processes and procedures. Accessibility is maintained on all corporate buildings for all persons regardless of disability, customer satisfaction is always key to our service. Advice for reasonable adjustments and liaison with the move co-ordinators enable Walsall Council facilities to be accessible to both staff and visitors. The supply chain aid with community payback schemes including small refurbishment of War Memorials, driveways repairs to community associations and financial contributions to good causes within Walsall boundaries.

### Housing Standards

There are a number of initiatives that the Housing Standards team is involved in and these include;

#### *Helping support disabled residents secure a home that meets their needs*

The Housing improvement team has approved 965 adaptations to resident's homes in 2019 (up to end 20 November 2019) totalling over £4.5M of investment. This ranges from minor

adaptations (grab rails, door widening) to stair lifts and vertical lifts and new extensions. William Weston, who was awarded 'National Housing Improvement Officer of the Year' at the prestigious Foundations Charity awards, in October 2019, has principally managed the work.

#### Helping Tackle fuel poverty and Excess Winter Deaths

The Council has again refreshed its Home Energy Conservation Act Action Plan (<https://go.walsall.gov.uk/Portals/0/Uploads/Housing/Heca%20update%20July%202019.pdf>) which has been vital at securing significant external funds:

- a) Warm Homes Fund – 2 major successful bids (£325,000 for dwellings, £465,000 for park homes) to provide first time gas central heating for those in fuel poverty;
- b) Ecoflex-We have helped over 650 households in the borough get a range of heating and or insulation improvements to their homes through what is called Energy Company Obligation (ECO) and ECO Flex. We estimate that this has brought in £760,000 of funding. The schemes involve approved contractors sourcing money from an energy company to pay for works. The scheme costs the Council nothing (except in terms of our officer time to promote and review applications under it) but directly helps us help vulnerable residents and tackle fuel poverty;
- c) Gas Charity Hardship Fund npower-£9,513 Grant funding secured invested to help 58 households in the Borough- interventions to address gas safety, gas leak or CO poisoning;
- d) FILT Affordable Warmth npower – Secured £14,000 of grant to help with 10 New boilers/Central Heating systems fitted for vulnerable customers in the Borough;
- e) LEAP- promotion of this initiative has helped vulnerable residents in the Borough have saved circa £160K following interventions by the Local Energy Advice Partnership which include energy efficiency measures and switching energy suppliers;
- f) Fuel switching - The Council have been supporting residents to undertake fuel (supplier) switching for a number of years now through a range of promotion activities including leaflets. The initial results from the latest auction show that circa 363 households in Walsall can benefit from a switch and this would save them a combined circa £30,000 for the next 12 months;

#### Enforcing energy standards

The team's action has ensured that 158 Private rented properties have received energy efficiency measures from Landlords to improve the Energy performance certificate rating of the dwelling to E or above following our intervention.

#### Supporting Vulnerable Private Tenants

The Housing Standards Service has taken legal action on 103 cases to secure improvements of private housing in the worst situations their work has needed prohibition orders to be served and joint work with colleagues from the Housing Advice service to ensure the tenants can secure safe alternative accommodation.

New project commenced in 2019 funded via grant secured under the Controlling Migration initiative, which is helping private renting tenants and especially those from new migrants including commissioning Nashdom CIC to help inform and encourage vulnerable residents of their rights and ability to contact the Council about poor private rental properties.

The team has also secured £5,000 from the Electrical safety fund to tackle dangerous electrical issues for especially vulnerable residents.

### Community, Equality and Cohesion Team

The Community, Equality and Cohesion service area supports those who are disadvantaged and excluded in a number of ways including:

- The provision of good quality Interpretation, Translation, Transcription and Easy Read service (ITTE). This is a commissioned service available to our customers at the point of contact. The quality is monitored, measured and analysed and data used for sharing future service provision;
- English as a Second language courses (<https://www.walsallforall.co.uk/learn-english-for-free>) are available for customers with little English throughout Walsall Borough. This is one of the key areas of the English Language Intelligence Unit. Walsall for All featured an article and a case study on learning English in the second newsletter, which was released in July 2019. ([https://gallery.mailchimp.com/c1af7b03684c220104bd17369/files/ce036cc3-1046-4b6b-91be30a247b26e70/May\\_June\\_19\\_Walsall\\_for\\_All\\_Newsletter\\_Final\\_Digital\\_.pdf?\\_ga=2.20162680.1129203417.1574092201-184806132.15519735280](https://gallery.mailchimp.com/c1af7b03684c220104bd17369/files/ce036cc3-1046-4b6b-91be30a247b26e70/May_June_19_Walsall_for_All_Newsletter_Final_Digital_.pdf?_ga=2.20162680.1129203417.1574092201-184806132.15519735280));
- Providing residents with practical information about their locality by means of a Welcome Pack. This is our upcoming piece of work that will help new residents settle easier into the Walsall area.

In October 2019, the Walsall for All Programme launched the project on “Supporting victims of hate crime.” ‘Stand by Me’ Ambassadors have been trained to raise awareness of hate crime. In the same month, the project gained regional coverage on BBC Midlands, (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xi6VYlu9230>), where the news report featured two ambassadors’ stories on their experience of hate crime.

We have commissioned a series of activities aimed at research into experiences of Gypsies, Travellers and Roma living in Walsall, from unauthorised encampments to multi-occupancy housing. Results will be used to share service provision and remove barriers of these communities when using Council and wider services of Walsall.

We are also providing opportunities to support the disadvantaged through our partnership with Places of Welcome (<https://www.walsallforall.co.uk/places-of-welcome>). A Place of Welcome is a place where anybody can go, where people who come know they will be warmly welcomed, receive free refreshments and a guarantee of being made to feel valued and included. There are 19 Places of Welcome across Walsall that are open every week.

We have also funded up to 14 Innovation Projects to enable residents and hard-to-reach groups take part in a variety of projects, including sports, arts, community and cultural events, film screenings, hate crime awareness, supporting newly arrived communities, increasing employability, empowering women, youth ambassadors and many more.

### Localities

The Community Asset Transfer (CAT) Policy, invites voluntary organisations and groups (Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise Sector VCSE) to apply for the lease and management of a CAT, which has been made available by Asset Management for community use.

The transfer of the Council's asset to VCSE organisations will give Walsall residents and communities' access to provision they might not previously have had the opportunity to take advantage of. There are a number of requirements for a successful bid. These must be demonstrated at both Expression of Interest and Business Plan stage, at which the interested organisations must explain how they will provide.

The requirements support the ambitions of the Corporate Plan and include, how will the community benefit, explanation of the bidders understanding of the needs of the local community, what service/activities will be created. The successful bidder must also measure Social Value in terms as supporting exclusion and disadvantage amongst other measures.

#### Housing and Welfare Rights Service

On our externally procured housing and support contracts we will review all the diversity info collected about service users and match that against the population in Walsall during April 2020 to understand whether we are meeting their needs appropriately and what additional amendments to services are required (if appropriate).

We also carry out regular focus groups with customers (so far this year we have done focus groups with customers from Housing First, Aven House and dispersed Aven Accommodation).

We will also use the data on our housing management system to look at who is accessing our services and what we may need to do to address barriers. We are also in the process of developing a customer satisfaction survey across all of the MHJ service.

#### Walsall Proud Programme

Digital transformation can support equality and diversity by designing in these requirements right at the start of the change programme, options for delivering services differently are considered, as well as their impact on disadvantaged or excluded groups.

By understanding the demographic of the Council's citizen profile and by closely working together within the Council's teams that meet customer groups, using intelligence and insights from our knowledge and data, we are seeking to address these issues.

#### ICT, Print and Design and Schools' IT Traded Service

As supporting services, we engage with other service areas and find solutions to their business need always considering equalities. ICT find, procure and install specialist IT equipment as recommended through occupational health or Access to Work processes. ICT help adjust equipment, for example, to increase font size. This helps front facing service delivery to improve customer access.

The Information Governance team seeks to enable equal access to information rights by providing the opportunity to make requests via email, the Council website, paper leaflets and providing practical support to customers who may need assistance to submit requests that are required to be made in writing.

All teams receive requests via telephone, face-to-face, websites and email and wherever possible will adapt the format, content and contact arrangements to suit the customer.

The ICT team seeks to enable access to all by ensuring that requests can be made through the Council's website, email and electronic e-forms.

Assurance Team (Communication, Consultation, Statutory, Corporate and Local Government Ombudsman Complaints, Information Rights (including Subject Access requests), Freedom of Information (FOI) and Environmental Information Regulation (EIR) requests, Corporate Strategy and Performance

The Assurance team carries out for the Council a multi-skilled assurance function. Ensuring that we have the capacity to meet statutory response timelines, the service is streamlined to up-skill staff to ensure that those customers, internally and externally, who need use of our services can access our expertise when needed and at first point of contact across the wide range of our functions.

We take account of any potential barriers to receiving our service and are flexible when needed to ensure that customers with special needs are catered for. For example, the use specialist advocacy services and interpreters when needed. The service will often act as advocate on behalf of complainants as required to ensure customers receive fair treatment.

The Communications team has a role to liaise with all Council services to ensure the production of information that is easily understood and accessible. This may also include using different formats, for example large print, face-to-face communication, digital and social media. They are also involved in consultation activity, advising all services on tools and techniques when developing consultations for maximum accessibility and reach.

The ICT team has a role to liaise with all Council services to ensure the delivery of all systems, the Council's website and electronic forms meet accessibility standards. This may also include using different formats, for example large print, alternative text. They are also involved in consultation activity, advising all services on during the procurement and selection process when new systems are required.

Legal and Democratic Services

Agendas, reports and minutes are accessible through the Committee Management Information System (CMIS), which is available to both internal and external customers through the intranet/Internet. This system is AAA rated.

The service also manages an electronic petitions system, which is available to everyone and is again accessible through the Council's internet site. This allows all our residents to scrutinise our decision-making process ensuring openness and transparency.

Provision is made to support everyone taking part in local democracy. For example, hearing loops are available to ensure accessibility of Council meetings, whilst the Council systems are being reviewed in 2020 and as part of this upgrade, accessibility will be fully considered in the procurement process.

The Council has reviewed the reporting guidelines for producing cabinet reports and as part of the review has made sure that greater emphasis is placed on how any decision taken by the cabinet will reduce inequalities across the Borough. Two changes relate to the reporting of Health and Wellbeing implications and reducing inequalities in reports.

#### Health and Wellbeing Implications

To provide clearer advice, based on guidance from the Department of Health, on how to test against the Marmot Objectives, which underpin the Council's approach to reducing health inequalities.

#### Reducing inequalities

To further emphasise the legal requirements in the Equality Act 2010 to carry out an EqIA which must be appended to the Cabinet report. EqIAs must be undertaken when the need for a new policy, practice or service development change is identified, or when an existing one is reviewed. In addition, for any proposal where there is an organisational change or there are budgetary implications that may impact on people.

Democratic Services officers will provide support to all service areas to ensure that these changes are embedded in reports. In addition, the guidelines will be available in a number of formats for officers.