



NEWSLETTER

# NEWSLETTER

A review of 2023

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# Successes of 2023

## Reducing the digital divide

One of the most significant barriers to employment is the lack of digital skills and access to digital devices. Walsall Works identified 160 participants who would benefit from West Midlands Combined Authority's Connected Services Fund. The digital chromebooks provided would help support participants with finding employment or commencing online learning. As well as supplying devices we also issued participants with 120gb of free internet for those who did not have access to wifi.

### Good news story:

K received the device when both she and her husband faced unemployment while simultaneously relocating. The financial strain left them unable to afford a laptop, and they struggled to apply for jobs using their phones. The challenge was particularly significant as drafting supporting statements and cover letters on a mobile device proved cumbersome. Within a few months of receiving the laptop, both K and her husband successfully secured employment. K secured a cleaning role with Watmos, while her husband landed a Traffic Management position with APCOA.

## Team Awards

On 23 November 2023, Walsall Council gathered to honour and celebrate the outstanding contributions of their staff. The Staff Recognition Awards ceremony is an afternoon of appreciation, acknowledgment, and shared pride.

The Walsall Works Team were Highly Commended in the Proud of Our Communities category. And one of our Employment and Skills Officers, Parveen was Highly Commended in the Proud to Serve category.



## In 2023 Walsall Works has supported...



**1745**

Local residents



**313**

People in to accredited training or further education



**423**

People into employment

# Case Studies

In August 2023, Gabby, who had been a full-time carer for her son for 16 years, reached out to Walsall Works for support, feeling scared and confused about re-entering the workforce. Initially unsure about navigating benefits and digital job applications, Gabby found the process frustrating. Her Walsall Works Advisor stepped in, helping her create a CV and offering support at a job fair. However, overwhelmed by her son's transition to full-time care, Gabby temporarily disengaged.

In October, Gabby reconnected, having faced difficulties in an interview. With the advisor's guidance, they revamped her applications and focused on interview techniques. A breakthrough came with an interview for a supermarket, where, despite initial anxiety, Gabby showcased her bubbly character and commitment. When there was a delay in hearing back, her advisor, determined to provide closure, personally visited the store. Despite a paperwork hiccup, Gabby secured a role with them, commencing in November 2023, marking a triumphant return to the workforce after 16 years.

AK started his journey with Restart in July 2022 after being unemployed for three years. AK's main aim was to get back into the workforce and had been applying for a range of full-time roles, including customer service, manufacturing, and sales.

In his previous employment, AK had moved between different roles and was not able to sustain a long-term career. This was affecting his motivation as he felt that he was not able to progress and earn more for his family.

The action plan put together for AK involved looking for sustainable employment where he could progress.

There were initially some issues with attendance for appointments and carrying out agreed actions, and this was due to AK's low motivation due to the many applications made before without any replies or feedback. To overcome this and ensure that he was making a significant number of good applications.

With this new momentum, AK started to receive replies to his applications, and support was provided to prepare him for interviews. AK was a lot more confident, and this resulted in meetings with employers such as the Menfor Group and Innov8 Synergy. The latter was arranged through the EEO and AK received great feedback from the employer.

AK was asked to attend induction shortly after he started as a Warehouse Operative. Restart provided new work boots and travel costs, which took some of the pressure off until pay day. AK is overjoyed in his new position and has been there since August and is doing exceptionally well and earning more than he has in years. The company themselves have reported how good a worker AK is and are confident that he will have the ability to progress into new roles within the company.



The Link opened its doors on 10th January 2024, and it truly is a multi-agency approach to all-age services to access skills and employment support. The Link offers an independent centre serving the residents of Walsall and the wider region, connecting residents to a brighter future.

Local residents whose job prospects have been hit hard in recent years, will be able to walk into this one stop shop for adults and young people to receive advice and guidance, mentoring, job search and access to a wide range of providers in a safe and supportive environment.

Anyone can walk-in to The Link and they will be warmly greeted by a welcome host who will undertake some spot screening questions to triage users to the right service or provider

The Link forms part of a sustained effort by Walsall College, Walsall Works, West Midlands Combined Authority and Department for Work and Pensions to dramatically improve the access to key services for residents who are not in employment, education or training and for those who are employed but who wish to upskill to progress further in the workplace.

It also forms part of a regional youth employment offer delivered through a Youth Hub model which will operate from The Link, and youth advisors will support and help young people aged 18-24 to find employment or training opportunities. A range of local youth employment, skills and wellbeing providers will utilise the hub to engage with young people into key services.

The Link will operate 9.15am – 4.30pm from Monday to Friday and will be managed by the Walsall College who will ensure that employers are actively engaged to use the space to run recruitment sessions for live job vacancies, pre-employment pathways, apprenticeships, and work placements.

The official launch takes place on 15th February 2024, by Andy Street Mayor of the West Midlands.



# SWAPS

Sector-based work academies help prepare those receiving unemployment benefits to apply for jobs in different areas of work. Walsall College have a number of companies that they work with in different industry sectors. They range from training and jobs in construction, health and social care, education, retail, customer service and much more.



## Working in Construction

This course will prepare you for working in the construction industry by giving you a basic overview of the sector. During this training programme, you will also gain basic construction qualifications along with a green CSCS Card.

### Qualification obtained:

- Level 1 Certificate in Skills for Working in Construction
- Level 1 Award in Health & Safety in a Construction Environment
- Green CSCS Card

### Dates (9am-4pm):

- 29 January 2024
- 15 April 2024
- 24 June 2024

### Eligibility Criteria:

- This programme is for benefit claimants aged 19+
- You must be eligible to live and work in the UK
- Those with criminal convictions will be subject to Walsall College's reasonable adjustment policy
- Minimum Level Entry 3 English



## Retail and Hospitality Academy

The qualification is suitable for those just starting out in the industry, helping them to learn, develop and practice the skills required for employment and/or career progression in retail. All participants completing this programme will receive a guaranteed interview.

### Qualification obtained:

- Level 1 Award: Introduction to Retail Employment
- Level 1 Award: Principles of Customer Service for Retail

### Dates & Times:

- Ongoing

### Eligibility Criteria:

- This programme is open to the unemployed, aged 19 and over, subject to an enhanced DBS Check (those with criminal convictions are ineligible for this programme)
- You must be eligible to live and work in the UK
- English and maths at minimum level 1.



## Clinical Support Worker – Care 2 Care

This three-week programme will help you develop a basic knowledge of working in the NHS and private care sector. You will be encouraged to explore the Clinical Support worker roles whilst developing the skills to help support you through the application process.

### Qualification obtained:

- Introduction to Health, Social Care and Children’s and Young People’s Settings.

### Dates (9am-3pm):

- 15 January 2024
- 26 February 2024
- 15 April 2024
- 10 June 2024

### Eligibility Criteria:

- Aged 19+ and unemployed or on low income
- You must be eligible to live and work in the UK
- Those with criminal convictions will be subject to Walsall College’s reasonable adjustment policy
- Minimum Level Entry 3 English
- Driving license
- No criminal convictions.



## Working in the Education Sector

This three-week training programme will help adult learners develop a basic knowledge of working in an education setting. They will be supported in recognising their strengths and transferable skills to support the application process. All participants completing this programme will receive a guaranteed interview with Smile Education & other local education partners.

### Qualification obtained:

- Level 1 Award: Working in Schools
- Level 1 Award: Equality and Diversity
- Awareness of Safeguarding
- Employability Skills

### Dates:

- 26 February 2024

### Eligibility Criteria:

- Aged 19+ and unemployed or on low income
- Able to demonstrate the ability to work at a minimum Entry Level 3 maths and English subject to enhanced DBS (criminal conviction check)

# Events

## Bloxwich Jobs Fair

Walsall Works had a great day at the Bloxwich Jobs Fair. We had the opportunity to connect with over 300 people, with many coming from local neighbourhood areas. A number of people signed up for Walsall Works so they can gain access to support and advice from our team.



Keep an eye out on our website, social media, and bulletins for invitations to attend other job fairs and events.

## Upcoming Events

**NEW YEAR  
NEW CAREER**

Come along and talk to employers with vacancies and training providers with vocational and educational courses.

Opportunities in: Construction, Warehousing, Business Administration, Health & Social Care, Hospitality, Retail, Contact Centre and Manufacturing & Engineering.

Wednesday 24th January - 9am to 1pm  
Willenhall Chart Community Hub, 19 Gomer St. WV13 3NS

This is a free event, no booking is required just turn up on the day

HM Government | West Midlands Combined Authority | Walsall works

**Apprenticeship**

**Open Event**

**Ever thought of an apprenticeship?**  
Gain a qualification alongside first hand work experience!

Visit us and meet employers offering information and vacancies in a number of sectors to see if an Apprenticeship is the right path for you

We'll also be celebrating National Apprenticeship Week 2024, it will run from Monday 5 to Sunday 11 February. This week brings together businesses and apprentices across the country.

No need to book, just turn up on the day!

Thursday 8 February - 9:00am - 12:00pm  
Walsall Library, Lichfield Street, Walsall, WS1 1TR

Walsall works

# Job Clubs

**Walsall Works** host weekly sessions to provide support and guidance with:

- Finding the right career
- Writing a great CV
- Completing job applications
- Matching to local job opportunities
- Developing your interview skills
- Accessing training

Visit our job clubs at any of the locations listed below. You can reserve your booking by calling us at 01922 654353 or emailing us at [walsallworks@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:walsallworks@walsall.gov.uk).

To discover more about the support we offer, please visit our website at [www.walsallworks.com](http://www.walsallworks.com).

<b>Monday</b> 9am – 4pm	<b>Pleck Library</b> Darlaston Road, Walsall WS2 9RE
<b>Tuesday</b> 9am – 12:30pm	<b>Aldridge Library</b> Rookery Lane, Aldridge WS9 8NP
<b>Tuesday</b> 10am – 2pm	<b>Darlaston Library</b> King Street, Darlaston WS10 8DE
<b>Tuesday</b> 1:30pm – 3:30pm	<b>The Thomas Project</b> 196H Walsall Wood Rd, Aldridge WS9 8HB
<b>Wednesday</b> 9am – 4pm	<b>Brownhills Library</b> Park View Centre, Chester Road North WS8 7JB
<b>Wednesday</b> 9am – 4pm	<b>Ryecroft Community Hub</b> New Forest Road, Walsall WS3 1TR
<b>Wednesday</b> 10am – 12:15pm	<b>Caldmore Community Gardens</b> 12 Carless St, Walsall WS1 3RH
<b>Wednesday</b> 12:30pm – 3pm	<b>Ablewell Advice Centre</b> Central Hall, Ablewell Street WS1 2EQ
<b>Thursday</b> 9am – 4pm	<b>Bloxwich Library</b> Elmore Row, Bloxwich WS3 2HR
<b>Thursday</b> 9am – 1pm	<b>Willenhall Library</b> Walsall Street, Willenhall WV13 2EX
<b>Friday</b> 10am – 1pm	<b>Pelsall Village Centre</b> High Street, Pelsall WS3 4LX
<b>Monday - Friday</b> 9am – 4pm	<b>Walsall Central Library</b> Lichfield Street Hub, Walsall, WS1 1TR