

Walsall Adult Social Care Local Account 2023/4



Your annual update on our successes, improvements, challenges and areas where developments are underway across Adult Social Care in Walsall.



Walsall Council

PROUD OF OUR PAST OUR PRESENT AND FOR OUR FUTURE

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Introduction

Welcome to the 2023/24 edition of the Adult Social Care Local Account.

Our Local Account is informed from insights from the experiences of adults and carers receiving support. The Local Account provides an opportunity to reflect on how we have impacted daily life within local communities in Walsall by addressing the key areas you have identified as important. This invaluable feedback enables us to enhance, shape and innovate services.

During 2023, post-pandemic was a year of refocusing and working more closely with people accessing support, carers, families and colleagues. It has been an exciting year, with challenges that have encouraged us to innovate - for example, through the introduction of an Occupational Therapy clinic at Goscote, offering assessments completed on site or at home for those requiring low-level equipment or adaptations. This has resulted in doubling the capacity of the team and reducing the waiting times for those in need of support. We have continued to drive our vision forward, supporting people to live as full and safe a life as possible and make informed choices. Supporting this we set out our commitment to engaging and working with Providers around quality and fee levels with a new 3 year plan.

Adult Social Care is more prominent than ever in our daily lives. Our staff have worked hard to respond to rising demand whilst implementing key changes and putting the person at the heart of what they do. We must remember that caring is not only about organisations like ours, we can each make an individual difference where we live to look out for others in our community and signpost to support. In this local account, you will find details of the new Wellbeing Directory that offers information, advice and guidance about staying well and remaining independent, so please do spread the word.

What do we do

Adult Social Care is responsible for making sure the most vulnerable people in the borough get the care and support they need.

What we do...

Assess your
needs

Organise and
plan your support

Ensure there is
support to meet
your needs

Work to prevent
the need of
some residents
for Social Care
Support

Help support
those who are
caring for a loved
one

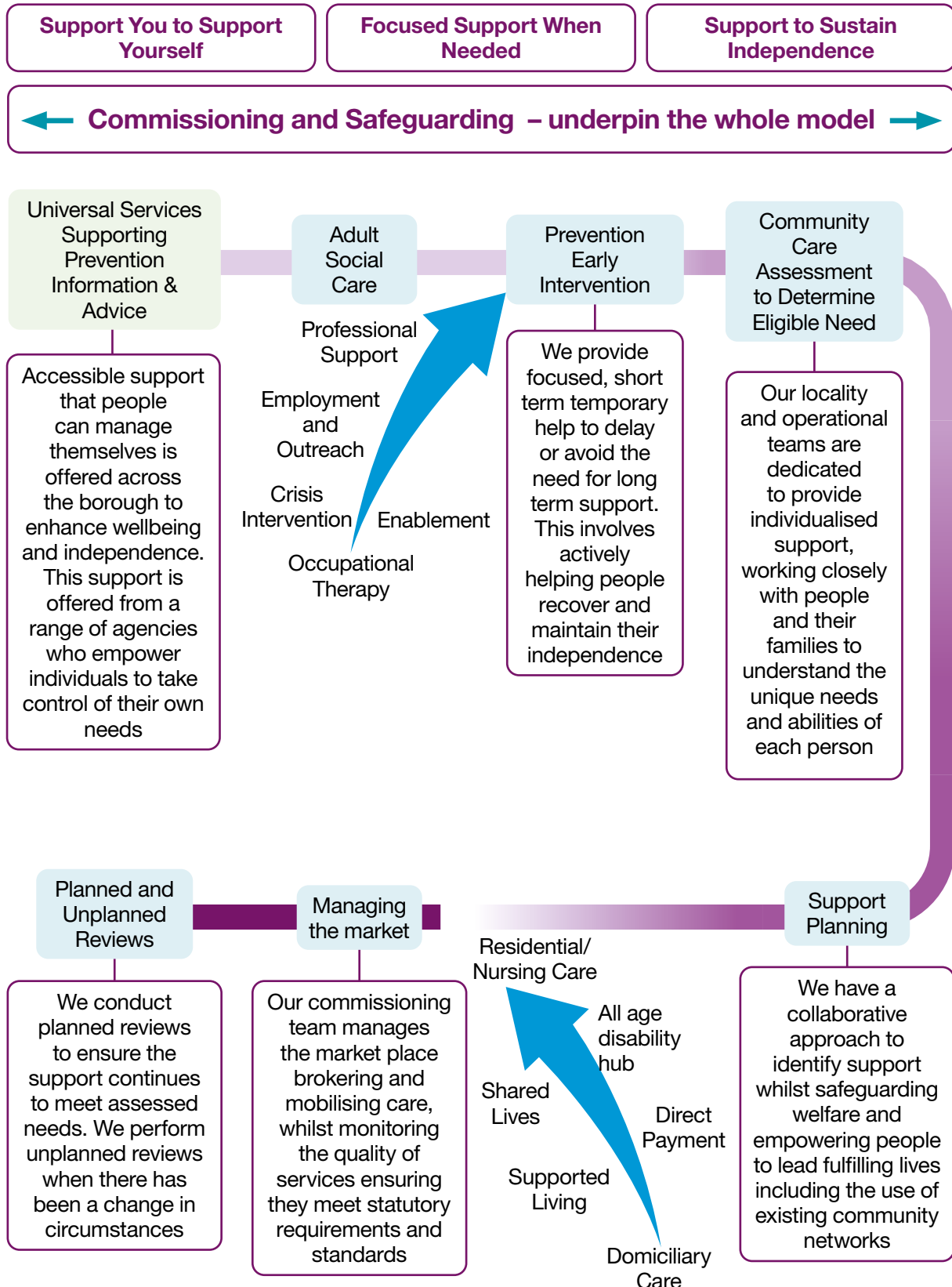
Provide
professional
support in the
community
through
outreach,
employment
assistance, and
guidance for
advocacy.

Provide a
statutory
requirement
associated with
safeguarding
adults, protecting
people from
abuse, neglect or
exploitation.

Give advice on
funding options
for care services
and signposting
for assistance
with accessing
benefits.

Adult Social Care Pathway

Recognising no person's journey through social care is linear



Key Facts and Figures

Key Facts and Figures for people receiving support

12,182



New requests for support (a decrease of 8.7% on last year's figures of **13,343**)

4,322



People supported with long term care people during the year. (an increase of 7.2 % on last year's figures of **4,031**)

1,857



New people assisted to regain their independence (an increase of 3.7% on last year's figures of **1790**)

572



Carers have been assessed/ supported during the year (an increase of 12.6% on last year's figures of 508)

86%



Of people aged 18-64 with a learning disability have been living on their own or with family (an increase of 2% on last year's figure of 84%)

Key Facts and Figures

Safeguarding

Everyone has the right to live without abuse or neglect and be treated fairly with dignity and respect.

Safeguarding adults is about preventing and responding to allegations of abuse or neglect of adults with care and support needs.

If you are concerned for yourself or someone you know, please contact Adult Social Care on 0300 555 2922.

Key Facts and Figures for Safeguarding

4,046



Safeguarding concerns raised
(a decrease of 1% on last year's
figures of **4,085**)

The top 3 types of risk:

Neglect

Psychological abuse

Physical abuse

89.4%



Percentage of people who
were asked about their desired
outcome (an increase on last
year's figures of **89.1%**)

93.2%

Of peoples' outcomes were
partially achieved or fully achieved
(an increase on last year's figure
of **91.6%**)

Key Facts and Figures

The Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards

Protecting adults to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect is a core duty of Adult Social Care. The Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) are part of the Mental Capacity Act 2005. The aim is to make sure that people in care homes and hospitals are looked after in a way that does not inappropriately restrict their freedom

Key Facts and Figures for DoLS

1841

Referral and renewal requests received during the year an increase of 26.4% on the 1456 the previous year



566

From Hospitals



1275

From Care Homes



792

People have a DoLS in place at the end of the financial year

Key Facts and Figures

Workforce

Key Facts and Figures about our workforce

8,200



Jobs across the Adult Social Care workforce (this figure covers both Walsall Council and the independent provider market)

Adult Social Care

405

Occupied posts

25.9%



Staff turnover rate during the year (similar to West Midlands region of 28.2% and Nationally 28.3%)

27.8%

Of the workforce
is Male

72.2%

Of the workforce
is Female

1,600



People in posts will reach retirement age in the next 10 years

61%

Of the
workforce
have a white
ethnicity

31%

Of the
workforce
have a
BAME
ethnicity

8%

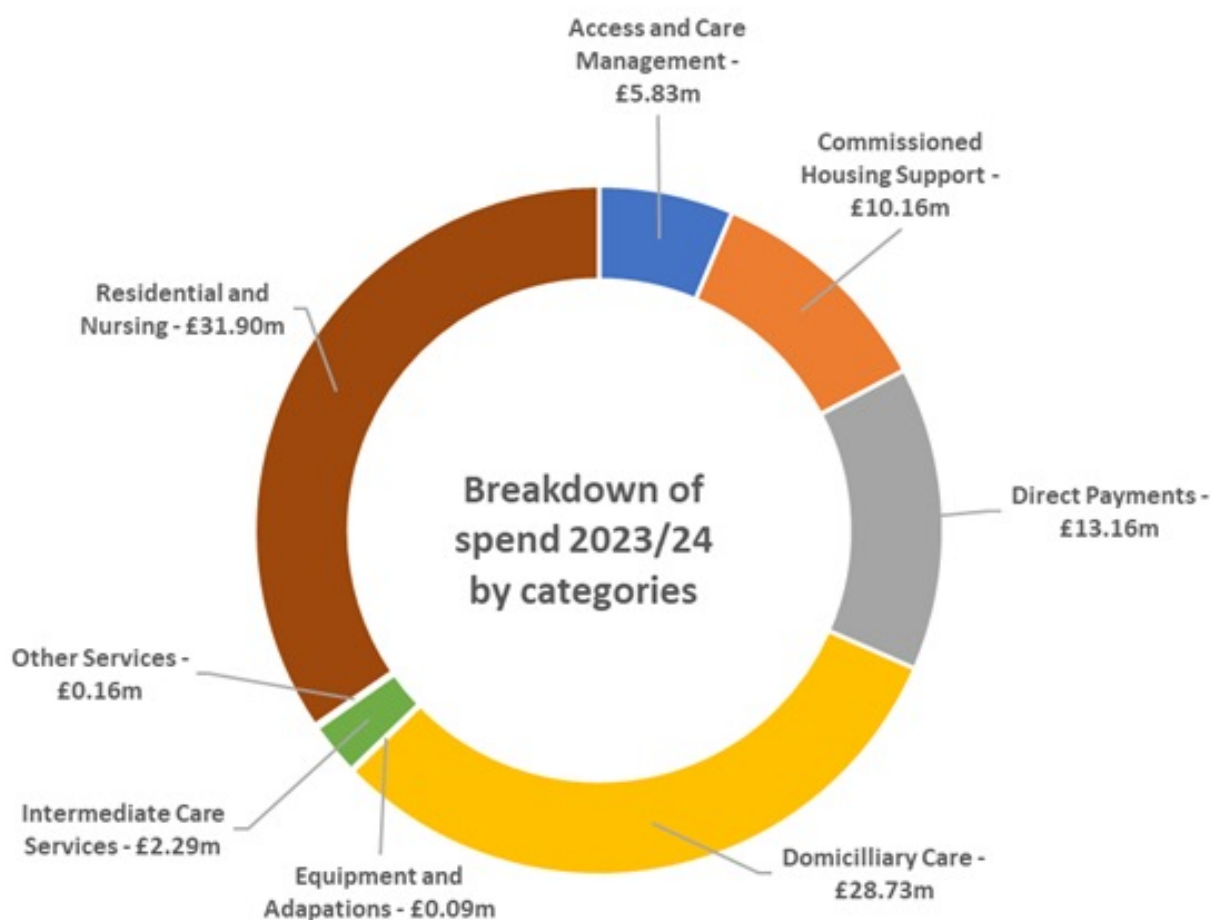
Of the
workforce
have an
undeclared
ethnicity

How we use our resources

In the context of reduced budgets and limited resources, the demand for Adult Social Care rises as people live longer and more people are able to live longer with more complex needs

2023/24 ADULT SOCIAL CARE NET SPEND (just over £92 million)

This compares to a spend of just over £79 million in 2022/23



Reflection on 2023/24

This section of the plan sets out the vision and priorities for Adult Social Care services in Walsall which were referenced in the previous Local Account 2022/23. This year's Local Account reflects on what has been achieved during 2023/24, the national, local context that we are operating in and how we are adapting to the current financial position.

Our vision

“Working together we promote health, wellbeing and independence for Walsall’s residents. We will provide the right support, at the right time, at the right place for those who need it. We respect and listen to the voice of our residents and their carers.”

Our priorities



Priority 1 – Community Assets

Supporting and promoting people's strengths and the growth of community assets to support care needs

Why is this important?

Our approach to providing social care is underpinned by the principle that we start by supporting people to retain their own strengths and build services around these. Instead of viewing people as a collection of needs that require help; our approach is that all people are assets, with skills, experience and networks of existing support.

Our role is to work in a personalised way to enable people to make the most of these assets and support them in ways that maintain them. We also want to enable the local community to develop support initiatives that prevent people's needs deteriorating.

What have we achieved?

The Walsall Wellbeing Directory has seen a substantial expansion, co-produced with local people and the voluntary, community, and social enterprise sector. These organisations actively support local communities in improving health and wellbeing. Residents can now access a wealth of support, advice, and events to enhance their everyday wellbeing. <https://go.walsall.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/walsall-wellbeing-directory>.

Work is also continuing to further populate the platform, whilst continually reviewing its functionality to ensure that the directory provides and up to date and extensive range of services, community groups and their activities to enable residents to engage with available community provision in their area. August 2023 saw the introduction of Occupational Therapy clinics at Goscote, offering assessments completed on site or at your home for those requiring low-level equipment or adaptations, the aim being to double the capacity of the team and reduce waiting times for those in need of support.

Strength-based practice (SBP) assessment/reviews focus on identifying what truly matters to individuals, connecting them with personal, family, and community resources to enhance their independence in meeting care needs. These assessment/reviews take into consideration aids and adaptations, assistive technology, moving and handling techniques, and community support options. Walsall Council aimed to implement and embed a robust SBP model to achieve operational efficiencies and cost savings.

Initiatives in the strengths-based practice reviews included the development of a new project team to review all new support packages and care home placements from hospital-based services, thus enabling proactive responses to changing needs and mitigating instances of overprescribing. Additionally, a peer support function was developed, which now takes place face-to-face on office-based days, promoting positive staff engagement and providing enhanced quality assurance. Face-to-face safeguarding peer support discussions were also introduced.

The West GP Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) continued to be regarded as a gold standard for multi-agency collaboration. New connections were established with Early Health, fostering a multi-agency approach between adult and child services. The rollout of Trusted Assessor training to social care practitioners facilitated the prescribing of low-level equipment, ensuring timely responses and reducing the number of necessary visits. Furthermore, all Occupational Therapists received single-handed care training, and closer ties were established with resilient communities to enhance awareness of community assets.

The introduction of the New Pathway to Independence service commenced, and a license agreement was secured for the Brain in Hand App. Additionally, a closer working relationship was developed with the outreach team. Recruitment drives have successfully increased capacity and diversified the workforce.

Examples of this are:-

Mr X was involved in a road traffic accident which resulted in a significant period in hospital. As Mr X had not applied for settled status in the UK, he had no recourse to public funds or suitable accommodation to return to following hospital discharge therefore was moved to a residential home.

Mr X initially received a period of rehabilitation in the residential home though this could not progress until alternative accommodation was sourced. The practitioner worked closely with Mr X with support of an interpreter to identify his outcomes and was able to source a self-contained flat with a supported living provider. Working with Occupational Therapy colleagues' appropriate equipment was provided, and community physio reengaged to work with Mr X by setting goals to achieve his outcome of being more independent.

Mr V was admitted to hospital following a fall and was discharged to a care home placement due to safeguarding concerns which meant he could not return to his previous home. The practitioner supported Mr V to identify what was important to him, which was to live back in the community.

At short notice, the practitioner was able to identify a flat in an Extra Care Housing scheme. As Mr V had no possessions, the practitioner was able to negotiate with the family of the previous tenant to gift essential items to him.

The practitioner ensured that Mr V was fully engaged with viewing the flat and supported with accessing the correct benefits from DWP.

Mr V has been supported to use technology and will regularly use his tablet to purchase items, will access the community and engages with activities within the Extra Care Housing scheme

Occupational Therapy

We recognise that over 2000 residents per year benefit from Occupational Therapy. So what do Occupational Therapists do? They help people of all ages across the borough overcome difficulties with everyday tasks, supporting you to enjoy life, work and leisure activities as independently as possible. The service helps you to gain or regain certain skills, often in the form of specialist equipment or adaptations to your home; sometimes it can mean finding a new way to do things. The focus is on enhancing your wellbeing and ability to participate in activities and live the life you want.

By the end of March 2024, **225** people had been seen across **79** clinics.

The next stage is to look at other venues across the borough where a similar offer can be made to make the clinics more locality based.

A number of Trusted Assessor training courses, provided by our Occupational Therapy Assistants, were successfully delivered to 68 social workers and social care facilitators during June/July 2023 to equip them with the skills to assess for and provide low level equipment and adaptations in order to reduce waiting times. This training is now being rolled out across the Mental Health and Learning Disability Teams.

Here are some stories about how this service has changed the lives of Walsall residents.

A gentleman lives with his wife and 2 adult sons, who are all his carers, with his wife being the main carer. He experienced, blood clots, several years ago and this resulted in his right leg above the knee being amputated, he also lives with COPD, is diabetic and has lymphedema on his left leg resulting in poor mobility. A hospital bed is located downstairs equipped with oxygen, and all medication is managed by his wife. Unfortunately, his wife lives with lung disease, she sleeps downstairs on the sofa and has done for many years, to keep an eye on her husband. Sometimes he ends up accidentally climbing out of the bed and finds his leg is hanging over the bed rail which causes him to fall out of the bed despite having the bed rail in place, this mainly happens when he has been unwell. As a carer his wife is struggling to transfer her husband from the hospital bed to the wheeled commode, she has been physically lifting him which has caused the skin on her lower arms to tear.

Following intervention by an Occupational Therapist the couple have had a new downstairs toilet fitted, the wheeled commode has been heightened slightly, which is easier for the gentleman to bear some weight on his hands and transfer himself with a little support from his wife onto the wheeled commode, a slide board has been provided.

There is a main bathroom upstairs which is not accessible so all washing for the gentleman is done by his wife by flannel. There is a good family network of support, but it was felt further assistance was necessary. A joint visit with a housing occupational therapist was arranged and a Disabled Facilities Grant completed for a wet room, bedroom downstairs and replacement of the ramping at the front door access.

The family were not aware that they could apply for a grant and were very appreciative of being supported in the grant process and application.

A gentleman with Parkinson's was assigned to Occupational Therapy Assistant to look at the provision of equipment/adaptations, following several safeguarding referrals made by West Midlands Ambulance Service due to falls and support for the carer who appeared to be not coping resulting in the risk of a breakdown in the situation. Following a visit a Disabled Facilities Grant application was made for a bathroom adaptation and a mobile commode. The gentleman had very poor balance but getting around in his own way. Physiotherapy had trialled varying walking aids but they had been unsuccessful. A carers assessment was also completed, and it was agreed to start so care support to relieve some of the stress from her and give her some respite,

This support has reassured the carer who no longer feels alone.

Priority 2 – Digital Connectivity

Supporting people to access digital and assistive technologies to support their needs.

Why is this important?

Technology and digital services are transforming the way care services are designed and delivered. The opportunities and innovation that technology presents are significant and is making a real difference to people who receive care services in Walsall. There has been a real focus on enhancing the use of assistive technology across Walsall to support and meet people's care needs. This is because it can help people to live independently whilst reducing demand and the need for more intensive and expensive forms of support.

What have we achieved?

Adopted an 'Assistive Technology First' approach to assessments ensuring Assistive Technology is a core part of the Adult Social Care offer and not simply viewed as an optional extra.

The launch of virtual house helping residents stay safe and independent at home. The new virtual house features the latest sensory, occupational therapy and technology enabled care aids, gadgets and equipment.

Hosted on the council website, the virtual house includes an interactive 3D tour and highlights the different kinds of useful aids and equipment that are available to help residents stay safe and remain living independently at home.

The virtual house tour can be accessed 24/7 from the council's website at: <https://www.walsall.gov.uk/virtualhousetour>

The virtual house helping residents stay safe and independent at home

If you or someone you know is having difficulties managing daily tasks around the home or with personal care, then a new interactive website feature from Walsall Council could help solve the problem.

Walsall Council has launched a new virtual house featuring the latest sensory, occupational therapy and technology enabled care aids, gadgets and equipment.

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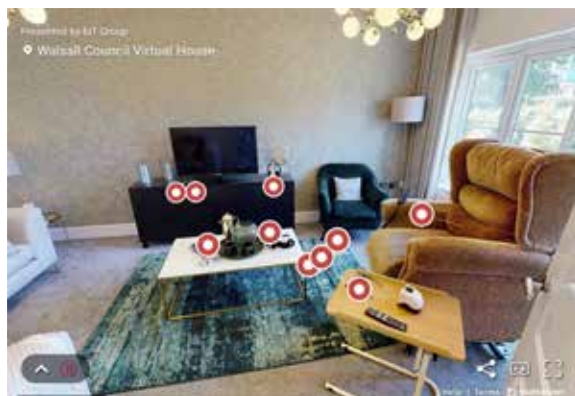
Viewers can tour the virtual house and see care aids, gadgets and equipment in place and how they can fit into a standard home setting. Throughout the house, each piece of equipment is labelled and marked with a 'hotspot'. When selected, this opens to give more information about the item with a description of what it does. This means that the person can then evaluate whether it meets their needs.

The virtual house includes a kitchen, bedroom, bathroom and living room, and features a wide variety of equipment from pager systems, pillow lifts, pressure-relieving equipment, shower stools, bath lifts, one cup kettles, talking kitchen scales, to minor adaptations such as grab rails, stair rails and ramps.

Information about how to obtain or buy equipment is also available. Residents may be eligible for help to make adjustments to their home and information about how to find out more about the funding available to adapt your home if you have a disability can be found at:

<https://go.walsall.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/help-live-home/funding-adapt-your-home-if-you-have-disability>

This technology has been developed by Matterport, a leading spatial data company that provides a platform to capture, store, share and experience 3D images and models.



braininhand

The Brain in Hand app is designed to support adults in the social care audience who have autism, mental health conditions, or cognitive impairments. It offers personalised support, anxiety management tools, a daily planner, emergency support, access to strategies, progress monitoring, and remote connectivity. The app helps individuals manage their daily lives, reduce anxiety, stay organised, access coping strategies, seek emergency assistance, track progress, and connect with their support network. It promotes independence, well-being, and overall quality of life.

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The integrated Brain in Hand system

Brain in Hand is a digital self-management support system for people who are autistic, who have learning disabilities, or who are managing mental health difficulties.

Combining human support and digital self-management technology, Brain in Hand helps people live more independently. We empower users to feel more confident, manage difficulties, and achieve their goals.



One-to-one specialist support

A qualified Brain in Hand Specialist supports each user to identify goals, recognise strengths, and develop strategies. Our team supports each user to get started and keep using the system in the best way for their unique needs.



Web and mobile software

A suite of self-management tools, personalised on a secure web page and accessed through a phone or smart device, helps with managing anxiety remembering things, planning, making decisions, and solving unexpected problems.



Round-the-clock support

Whenever the user needs some extra support, they can use a simple traffic light system to alert a responder to get in touch with them. This could be a trained BiH responder or a member of their existing support network.

Benefits Calculator

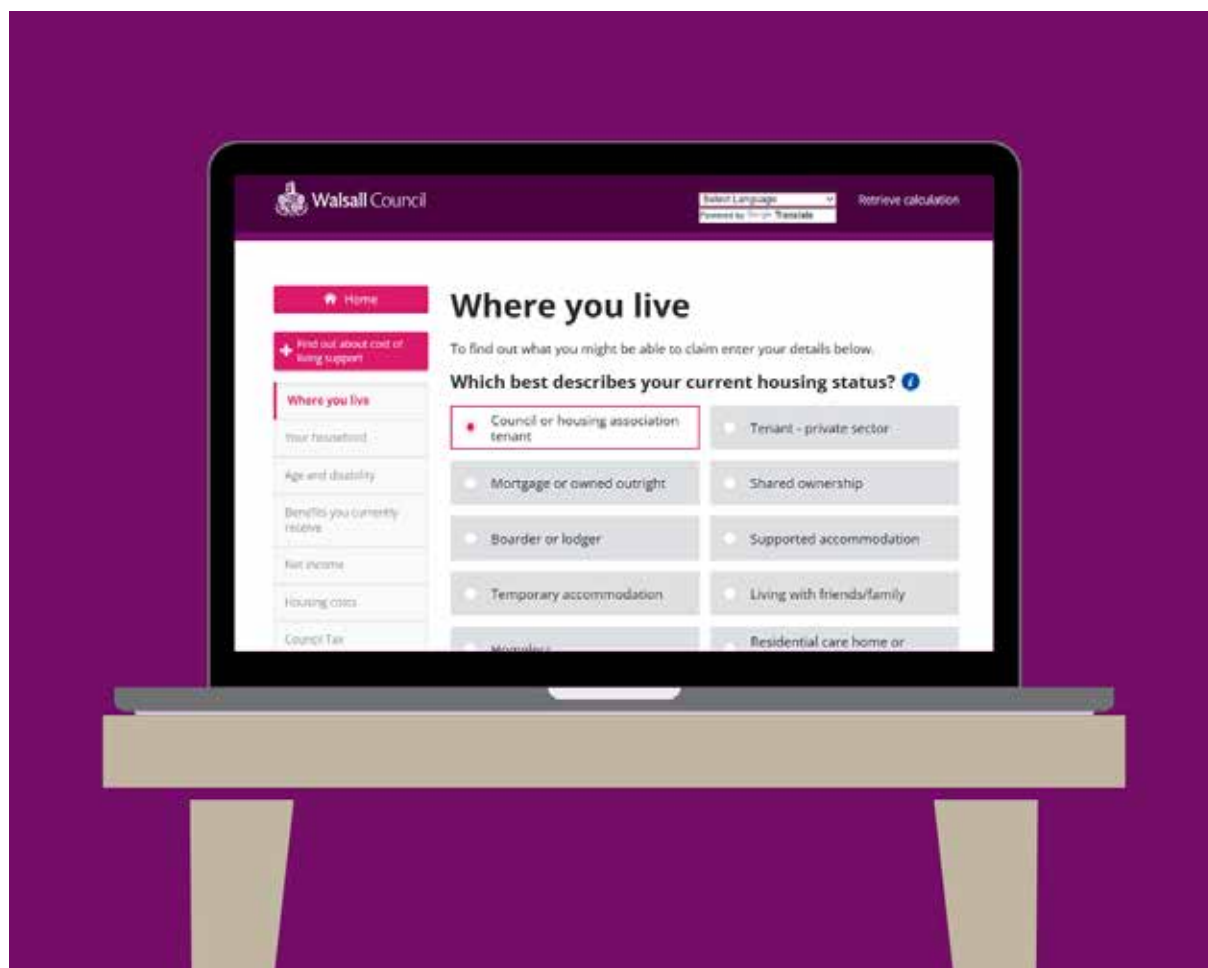
Did you know there is help to identify benefits you may be entitled to ?

A new benefits calculator to help residents in the borough identify benefits that they may be entitled to, developed by Entitledto Ltd launched on the 21st July 2023.

With around £19 billion of benefits remaining unclaimed in the UK each year, some households are missing out on the benefits they are entitled to. This calculator has been developed to make sure the borough's residents are not missing out on support and financial assistance that can in turn help with the increasing costs of living.

You will be able to input income, savings, pension and existing benefits into the calculator to see what you could be eligible to claim in addition to what you already receive. It is free to use takes about 10 minutes to complete and is open to all residents in the borough who are British citizens and over the age of 18. The information is kept anonymous and is protected it will only be used to calculate the benefits you may be able to claim.

To access the calculator visit [Walsall Council's website](#). If you need any help or support with accessing the calculate you can visit one of our [Walsall Connected Hubs](#).



Priority 3 – Person Centred Care

Empowering individuals by giving them control and choice in flexible, need-specific decision-making processes

Why is this important?

In Walsall, we want people to have person centred care and more choice and control over the services they receive, giving them better access to services that better meet their needs. This will help to support people's independence and ultimately improve their quality of life.

What have we achieved?

Our Outreach program is growing, with staff from within the service, completing an accredited Independent Travel Training qualification. This means they can help people preparing for adulthood and older, to travel independently.

Our Shared lives service - with the support and encouragement from a Shared Lives carer they have supported a person to move from a long-term shared lives placement to living independently with a package of care at the age of 50. The team is also working with social workers to support two other individuals currently in long-term placements, with the goal of helping them transition to independent living

Employment Service – Significant work has been undertaken around employer engagement across Walsall with continued partnership and cross-directorate working to support the wider employment agenda. The service has supported a diverse range of people to achieve their aspirations around employment, education and training, with people securing successes in paid employment, apprenticeships and undertaking voluntary work. In 2024 between January and March 22 people achieved their goals, these positive outcomes are a result of excellent partnership working between colleges, employers and colleagues across the service and directorate.

The success of these changes can be demonstrated in the fact that the number of people receiving care services reporting that they have control over their daily lives has been increasing consistently in Walsall. This is positive; however, we need to continue to focus on this moving forward so that people continue to feel empowered to shape the support that they receive.

Younger adult's team - We have developed a younger adult's team to provide a more robust approach to younger people transitioning from children's services to adult social care through stronger partnership working. Initially, the team was just working with young people with a learning disability but as the team has developed, young people previously supported by locality teams will now be supported within the younger adult's team. As the team grows, the next stage will be for young people within the mental health team to be supported by the younger adult's team. This will ensure all young people have support from dedicated transition workers. This has been done in a staggered way to ensure that the new team can gradually develop and ensure the right mix of skill and knowledge within the team and a dedicated transactions operational panel is in place where a multi-disciplinary team comes together including social care, education, health, and commissioning to plan for the future of the young people of Walsall with adult social care needs. One young person being supported by the team experienced numerous placement breakdowns and following extensive multi-disciplinary working and care planning, she progressed from requiring 3:1 support to living semi-independently and engaging in employment and volunteering.

Some examples of how the service has improved lives

A 16 year old person was referred into the outreach service to maximise their independence, around travel training, community inclusion and money management. Following input from the outreach team this young person is now supported in the community on a 1 to 1 basis not 2 to 1, has built confidence and is engaged in more activities, has gained skills in the home environment and is now paying for items and asking for receipts independently.

Due to the abrupt need to leave home this 18 year old person was matched with a shared lives placement, this enabled the carer to provide support around managing sexual health, relationships and finances. As a result of the success of the placement the young person is now in a stable environment supported by the shared lives service along with the employment service who have identified educational pathways resulting in a college placement.

A young person living at home with mom, was referred to Adult Social Care by the Ambulance Service due to mom being admitted into hospital, a 24 hour wrap around care package was put in place as the young person didn't want to move out of their home. We introduced the young person to one of our shared lives carers and arranged further visits which seemed to be enjoyed. At home they stayed in their room and did not interact with the carers, refusing to shower and put on clean clothes. Eventually a move was agreed into the shared lives placement where they have settled really well, interacting with the other people in the placement and going out with the carer, unfortunately mom passed away so the young person now remains in the placement.

An Assistive Technology suite opened within Goscote, which allows the team to showcase their ongoing work with various types of assistive technology and how this can benefit people. One of the initiatives "Just Checking" has seen demand double across the year compared to the previous year.

Priority 4 – Shaping the Adult Social Care Provider Market

Helping to shape and support a strong and stable local care market in Walsall

Why is this important?

It has been recognised for several years now that the care market in England has become increasingly fragile. This is due to problems with funding, workforce issues, due to difficulties with the recruitment and retention of care workers and rising demand for care services. Therefore, it is essential that we support and stimulate a strong, sustainable and vibrant adult social care market in Walsall to help the sector overcome these issues and maintain a strong local market. This will ensure that the current and future care needs of residents can be met, whilst supporting people's choice and control. Maintaining a strong market will also ensure a more financially viable system. We want to actively encourage new providers to enter the market, particularly small, local providers who know the area and can deliver truly personalised outcomes for people.

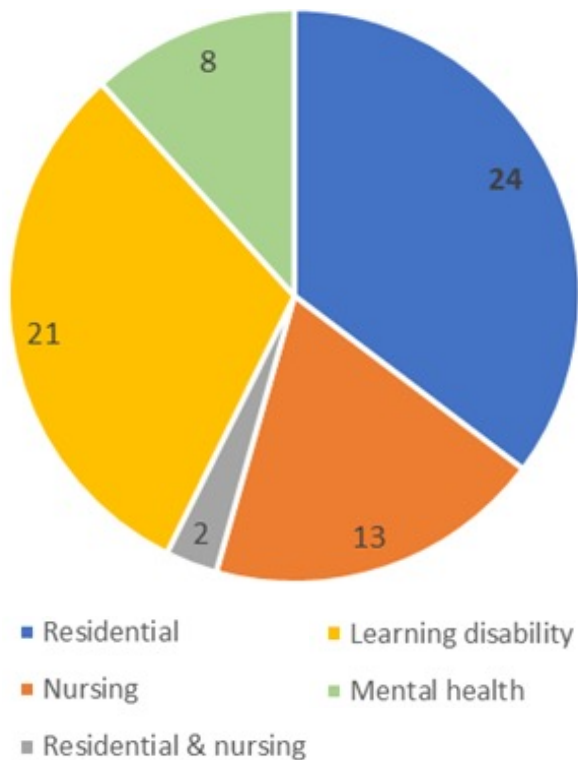
We also want to facilitate and help to shape a flexible care market in Walsall, to ensure that it can cater to the different needs that some individuals may have throughout their care journey. This will ensure that transition between services can be as smooth and seamless as possible.

What have we achieved?

68

68 Care homes in Walsall (an increase of 5 from the previous year)

Walsall care home by type: as at 31/03/24



91

Community providers in Walsall (an increase of 16 from the previous year)

89

Providers registered to deliver home care

30

Providers registered to deliver supported living

8

Providers registered to deliver sheltered/ extra care housing

Some providers are registered to deliver more than one care type

Priority 4 – Shaping the Adult Social Care Provider Market

Care Quality

Helping to shape and support a strong and stable local care market in Walsall

64.15%

Of providers are rated good or outstanding

Walsall's Quality in Care Team

The Quality in Care Team (QiCT) utilises various data sources to identify areas for improvement and provide support to enhance quality. Data indicates there is adequate capacity within the market and provider sustainability remains strong with minimal instances of provider failure and only a small number of providers returning contracts. Care Quality Commission (CQC) ratings serve as only one aspect of the team's approach.

In addition to addressing immediate concerns, the QiCT's approach also emphasises long-term compliance and adherence to CQC and contractual restrictions. This comprehensive analysis informs their decision-making process regarding the level of support required, in alignment with the Quality Improvement and Monitoring Compliance Framework.

Quality referrals, local intelligence and information sharing through various meetings between the Local Authority, Integrated Care Board, Care Quality Commission, Quality Team, Infection Prevention Control, and Health Watch are also employed to identify quality concerns in the borough and to agree appropriate actions. Additionally, the QiCT hold separate monthly meetings with the Dementia and Medication Management Teams. The team also relies on a monthly monitoring tool, self-submitted by bed-based providers, which provides data on pressure injuries, falls, hospital conveyances, hospital admissions, medication incidents, and safeguarding concerns. Provider engagement is assessed based on their active involvement with the team and openness to offered support, as well as their improvement plans and rates of progress. Compliance with CQC/contract restrictions is also taken into consideration. During 2023 the QiCT held **78** training sessions relating to **18** different training areas for a total of **2,561** members of care staff across the borough.

Priority 5 – Ensuring Safe and Quality Services

Improving safeguarding, the workforce and people's wellbeing

Why is this important?

It is important that we continue to maintain and improve the quality of all services, including those that we have a statutory duty and responsibility to provide for people with care needs. Safeguarding is an example of the type of service that falls into this category and is all about protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while at the same time making sure that the adult's wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action.

What have we achieved?

2023/24 provided the opportunity to review, invest and strengthen the safeguarding team responding to safeguarding concerns raised within Walsall. The additional capacity has enabled further recruitment of qualified social workers to the team and the appointment of safeguarding research officers to support within the process and a person's safeguarding journey. Walsall are continuing to build upon this and review the partnership arrangements for responding to safeguarding in the Borough and consider the opportunity to develop a multi-agency safeguarding hub in 2025/26. Across the directorate there has been close work with individuals to achieve their desired outcomes and live safe and happy lives which is demonstrated through making safeguarding personal data locally and regionally.

The appointment of a safeguarding lead has added invaluable opportunities to work with operational teams and the Walsall Safeguarding Partnership (WSP) focussing on key priorities within WSP strategic plan which includes Self Neglect and Hoarding, All age exploitation, Sexual abuse and child Neglect. The safeguarding lead through the safeguarding partnership audits, safeguarding adult reviews, internal audits and partnership feedback continues to look at ways we can make positive change, improve practice and be a responsive Borough. Areas of focus, assurance activity and analysis of safeguarding in the Borough remains critical to inform, shape and respond to changes in the Borough and any emerging themes.

The Walsall safeguarding partnership is progressing year two of a three-year strategic plan. The adult priorities are:

- Self-neglect & hoarding
- All age exploitation

The Local Authority, Integrated Care Board, West Midlands Police, and many other organisations come together to form the Safeguarding Board. There is a commitment to addressing strategic safeguarding issues and share learning from good practice, where things could have been done better, and other experience to improve adult safeguarding.

Self neglect and hoarding

Walsall's strategic intention was to raise awareness of the issues across the adult's workforce in order that persons living with self-neglect and hoarding can be identified for assessment and support to reduce need and risk. The interface with children's safeguarding was also recognised and it was deemed essential that the adult's workforce recognise and know when and how to respond when there are children living with adults in these circumstances.

Self-Neglect & Hoarding Conference 'Be part of making a difference'

The Self-Neglect & Hoarding Sub-Group, delivered a conference, supported by key speaker Michael Preston-Shoot, Independent Consultant, who presented the National Perspective. The conference was attended by 192 practitioners from 14 different agencies in October 2023. The conference objectives were to:

- To raise awareness of Self-Neglect & Hoarding, the Strategy and Toolkit.
- To support practitioners to identify, assess and manage risk through the
- Self-Neglect & Hoarding toolkit.
- Raising awareness about the work of the self-neglect panel (chaired by ASC) and how to refer
- Promoting a strength-based approach by working alongside adults who self-neglect and/ or hoard.



Some of the Feedback:-

"A very useful and informative conference. Useful handouts".

"Conference was excellent. Nice to feel like not so alone with dealing with things and where to turn.

It was refreshing to see how many agencies in the Walsall borough came together at the conference to discuss the experiences and share good practice".

"The Conference was well organised and relevant to me as a member of the Adults Safeguarding and sponsors, I have more tools to address self-neglect and hoarding referrals"

There is recognition that there continues to be work and development in respect of self-neglect and hoarding in the Borough which is both a local and national challenge. Work continues in 2025 to strengthen, learn and develop the partnership response to working with people in Walsall.

All age exploitation

Walsall Safeguarding Partnership recognised that exploitation does not stop on a person's 18th birthday. Where a child is experiencing exploitation at 17 years and is seen as a victim, it becomes more apparent that services needed to recognise and respond to the very likelihood that the same young person will continue to be vulnerable to the risk of exploitation and will continue to require support and or protection after their 18th birthday. It is for this reason Walsall Safeguarding partnership have agreed to an 'all age approach' to tackle exploitation in the Borough. This supports the development of a Younger Adults Team within Adult Social Care to strengthen relationships, partnership practices and arrangements and provide further focus at a pivotal time in a young persons life.

Progress against Partnership Priorities

- The Sub-Group conducted a 'True for Us' exercise in line with the recommendations from the Independent Enquiry into Child Sexual Abuse in Telford. This review has informed the groups workplan.
- In October a strategic needs assessment and analysis was commissioned . This work will continue into 2024.
- Following the appointment of the new Head of Safeguarding Partnership and Head of Service for children MASH, Exploitation and Adolescents with Complex Needs in March 2024 priority was given to developing a draft dashboard for the group and a full review of the terms of reference for the Sub-Group and the Exploitation Panel commenced.
- To support the submission of intelligence between Panel and Sub-Group a revised information and intelligence report template was endorsed for use.
- The work completed by Youth Justice Service on Disproportionately was presented. This informed decisions to ensure that data captures the demographics of victims and perpetrators
- In March 24 Safer Walsall Partnership commissioned an independent review of its response to Modern Slavery. This will inform work in this area in 2024 and decisions about governance.
- The Sub-Group supported County Lines Intensification week in March 2024 which saw 16 arrests for drug and weapon related offences.

Adult social care has used the work of the partnership, local safeguarding information and feedback from managers to develop a specific role to support the work and the continued need for a focus on exploitation. A senior practitioner for adult exploitation will join the service 24/25 which will strengthen our existing response to safeguarding.

Community engagement



The Adult Social Care User Survey represents an annual initiative conducted by local authorities throughout England in collaboration with NHS Digital. Its primary objective is to gather valuable insights and feedback from people who receive community-based support within their own homes, as well as those residing in residential and nursing care facilities.

Since the 2018/19 period, Walsall Council Adult Social Care has established a partnership with Walsall Healthwatch, leveraging their expertise as an independent advocate. This collaboration has been instrumental in facilitating the participation of people with dementia who reside in residential and nursing homes in the survey. Prior to this partnership, their voices often went unheard, and their experiences were not adequately captured.

During the 2023/24 survey, Healthwatch reached out to 280 people residing in 87 different care homes, both in and out of borough extending an invitation for them to contribute to the survey. The feedback of 119 people was subsequently collected, accounting for over 83% of the total responses provided by people living in residential and nursing care. In conducting these visits, a combination of face-to-face interactions and technology-enabled methods such as telephone or tablet interviews were utilised. During 2023/24 we also undertook a survey to gather opinions from those of you who are caring for a person aged 18 or over. There are 30,632 known unpaid carers in the borough and during the period 1/09/22 to 31/08/23 we were contacted by 1,534 people of which 521 received an assessment or review and were sent a copy of the survey. We can now see the results of both surveys.

Community Satisfaction

Understanding the views and experiences of adult social care users and Carers in 2023/24

On a yearly basis Adult Social Care undertakes a survey to understand the experience of adults in receipt of support and every other year we undertake a survey of the experience of carers. The information helps us set our future priorities and identify any areas for improvement

Survey Results – Adult Social Care Users



We surveyed
2,687 people

857 (31.89%) of you responded



524



333



88% of you were
satisfied with your
care and support



93% of people using
the say these services
make them feel safe

Some of your Feedback

My husband and myself are very pleased with the help and care Walsall Council have provided since my health has deteriorated and feel they do an excellent job.

I am very happy with the carers I have, they make me feel special. They look after me very well.

I am very happy in my care home and have made friends here.

The care and support I receive from the local authority enables me to live independently. I have never really been that comfortable in large groups of people or away from my home for too long. The thing I value the most is living in my own surroundings supported by the carers daily for which I am extremely grateful.

Community Satisfaction

Survey Results – Adult Social Care Carers



We surveyed
468 carers

180 (38.46%) of you responded



115



65



33.6% of carers
were extremely or
very satisfied with
social services



56.8% of carers reported
they have been included/
consulted in discussions
about the person they
care for

The top five reasons you reported in the last 12 months where your caring role affected your health:-

Feeling tired

**Generally
feeling stressed**

Disturbed sleep

Feeling depressed

Short Tempered

Some of your Suggestions

**I need to speak to a person not a
machine telling me “you will be in touch
in the next 24-48 hours”**

**Efficiencies to stop people
having to go back and forth**

**A monthly check in
services could prove
useful as talking to
someone would be good**

**A website with guidelines as to
what carers may be entitled to which
contains further information this
would make things easier all around**

We want you to tell us how things have been so we can learn from your experiences and we want you to help us to shape things going forward. You may have experiences you can share with us because you have used adult social care services, you might be caring for someone who needs some extra support or you might just want to get involved because you have some good ideas on how we can do things differently.

You can make a comment, compliment or complaint in the following ways

- complete our online form which can be found at <https://go.walsall.gov.uk/tellus>
- e-mail customer-care-teams-social-care@walsall.gov.uk
- Complete our feedback form and send to Walsall Council, The Assurance Team, 3rd Floor, Civic Centre, Darwall Street, WS1 1TP Telephone 01922 650487 or free phone 0800 0856018

Community Satisfaction

Compliments and Complaints

Complaints and Compliments



112

Statutory complaints received in 2023/24 (a reduction of **6.6%** on the 120 the previous year)

2

Complaint investigations upheld by Local Government Ombudsman

9

Enquires / Complaints received by Local Government Ombudsman



214

A significant rise in the number of compliments received in 2023/24 compared to 91 received in 2022/23

Main issues/themes of complaints

Quality/timeliness of service delivery

Clarity/ timeliness of information sharing

Charging Inaccuracies

Main themes from compliments

Professionalism and Dedication

Support and Helpfulness

Empathy and Compassion

Efficiency and Effectiveness

Teamwork and Collaboration

All people are entitled to a high standard of service, and our aim is to provide people with the utmost support possible. Your feedback is invaluable to us in rectifying issues and enhancing our services for the future. Therefore, we greatly appreciate and encourage your input, whether it's in the form of comments, compliments, complaints, or suggestions.

Our customer care team can be contacted here: <https://go.walsall.gov.uk/contact-walsall-council>

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ADULTS PRINCIPAL SOCIAL WORKER 2023/2024

Key Achievements and Developments

What is a Principal Social Worker?



Care Act 2014 [Care Act Statutory Guidance](#) 1.27 states a PSW priorities include;

- lead the development of excellent social workers.
- oversee quality assurance and improvement of social work practice.

Seanna Lassetter PSW has worked closely with the Principal Occupational Therapist in 2023/2024 to develop practice, quality assurance and support the workforce.

Social Work Education



- We are currently in the position to expand our SW degree apprenticeship in 24/25 due to the grant funding of 4 external places. This builds on the success of previous cohorts – one apprentice acquired a first-class degree in 2024.
- I continue as a PSW rep on the executive board and programme board of the [West Midlands Social Work Teaching Partnership](#). This is continuing to have a positive impact due to partners engagement and support.
- In addition to 15 on our [ASYE](#) programme and other learners we supported 6 final year placements for student social workers who gave coats away in social work week – see photo.



Safeguarding Adults



- Worked with the Walsall Safeguarding Partnership to deliver successful learning events as part of the practice, learning and development subgroup - over 200 people attended the self-neglect conference in October 2023
- Internal safeguarding training has continued to be offered and a safeguarding lead has been successfully appointed.

Priorities for 2024/25



- Development of new carers workflow to promote increased uptake of carers assessments and support.
- Lead and oversee [IMPACT](#) demonstrators to improve social work practice with older people.
- Contribute to CQC readiness activity to evidence safe and effective practice.

Workforce Development



- Workforce strategy developed & implemented in Jan 23 to support recruitment & retention of social workers was followed by a successful recruitment campaign during May 23
- Second annual Staff Celebration Event in Feb 24 recognised outstanding achievements in 2023
- Trained 5 Approved Mental Health Professionals (included 2 from Children's services), 4 Best Interest Assessors, 4 Practice Educators, 2 Practice Assessors, 2 Practice Educator updates.

Practice Development



- The practice leader's forum for team managers and practice leads has further developed into a monthly in person meeting to support practice improvement.
- Engagement in [Social Work with Older People Research](#) has supported reflective practice and findings will inform practice improvement.
- Workshops delivered with the Principal Occupational Therapist to all teams in 2023 have further embedded strengths based practice and outcomes based care and support planning.

Practice Quality



- Revised approach to casefile audits introducing a lived experience tool in October 2023
- Walsall Adult Social Care Quality Assurance of Practice Audit Schedule 2024 includes audits of assessments, reviews and safeguarding enquires every 2 months.
- In addition, quarterly audits are undertaken of Approved Mental Health Professional Reports and Mental Capacity Assessments.
- Reports and actions plans are overseen by the monthly practice leader's forum.

National & Regional Role in Practice Leadership

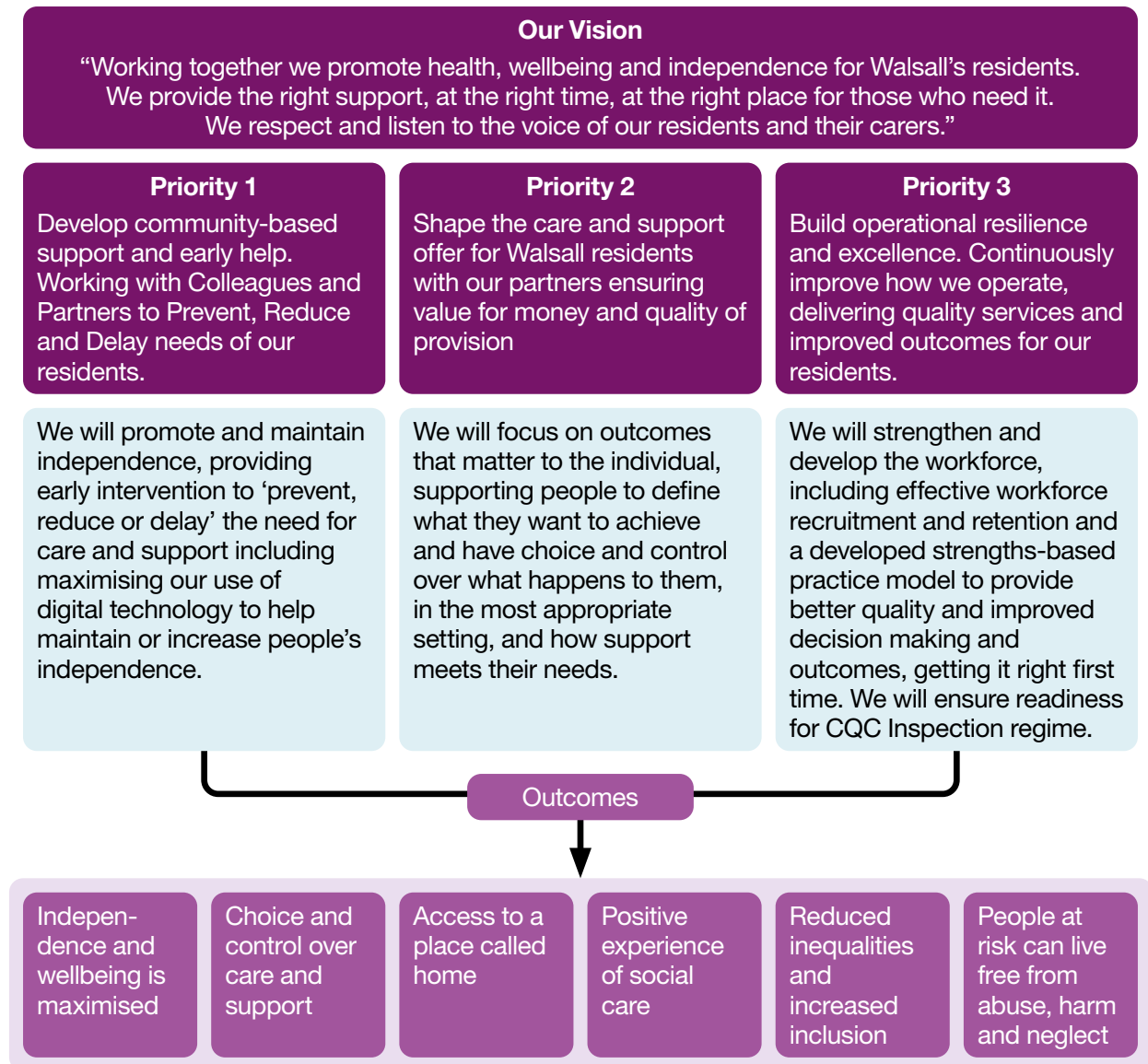


- Co-Chair West Midlands Adults PSW Network and attend national chairs network and national meetings.
- Participated in [Research in Practice](#) national PSW CPD events
- University of Birmingham Advisory Group for current research on Family Group Conferencing approach
- Represented [WMADASS](#) at the [Social Worker of the Year Awards](#) ceremony and parliamentary reception

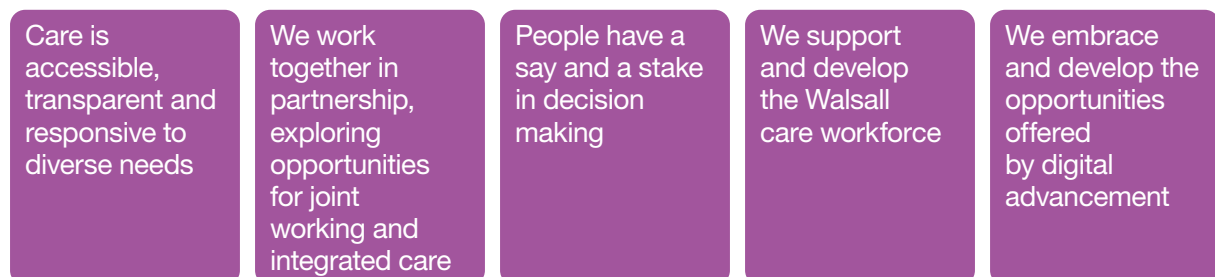


Our priorities for the year ahead

We have identified three priorities which will enable us to move towards our vision for Adult Social Care and achieve the outcomes we want to see for our residents. While we do this our commitment to safeguarding, to listening to the views of people who are experts by experience, and putting the people we support at the heart of all we do will be integral to our plans.



To achieve this, we will work to ensure that:



Closing Statement

In conclusion, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to the residents of Walsall for taking the time to engage with the Local Account for Adult Social Care. This publication has been a collaborative effort to provide you with a transparent and insightful view of the work undertaken in Adult Social Care.

We firmly believe that by working together, we can create an inclusive and supportive environment for all residents in Walsall. Your trust and support have been instrumental in our continuous efforts to improve and meet the diverse needs of our community.

We understand that each person in Walsall has unique needs and aspirations, and our Adult Social Care services are designed to enhance the quality of life for all adults requiring assistance. From social care assessments to specialised care, we strive to offer a comprehensive range of services tailored to your specific circumstances.

The experiences shared by people and their families, as well as the dedicated professionals, have highlighted the positive impact of our services on people's lives. These insights have served as a constant reminder of the importance of our work and have inspired us to continually evolve and improve.

We are proud to be part of the Walsall community, and this Local Account is an invitation for you to join us on this journey. Your feedback and contributions are vital as we strive to develop Adult Social Care services that truly meet the evolving needs of our residents.

As we conclude this publication, we hope that it has provided you with an understanding of the services available, the progress made, and the challenges we face. We remain committed to improving and delivering the best possible care to the residents of Walsall.

Once again, we express our heartfelt appreciation for your trust and support. Together, we can build a stronger and more inclusive community, where the needs of all people are met with compassion and dignity.

Thank you for being an integral part of our mission to provide exceptional Adult Social Care in Walsall.

