

Cabinet – 19 May 2020

Supporting Shielded and Vulnerable residents in Walsall – Covid 19

Portfolio: Councillor Gary Perry – Community, leisure and culture
Councillor Adrian Andrew –Regeneration

Related portfolios: All

Service(s): Resilient Communities and Money Home Job

Wards: All

Key decision: Yes

Forward plan: No

1. Aim

- 1.1 To ensure a strong support network for shielded and vulnerable people in the borough of Walsall during Covid-19, and to support residents in self-isolation to stay safely at home and to support vulnerable residents in hardship.
- 1.2 To do this through application of a resilient communities approach so that Walsall MBC support our vibrant voluntary and community sector, in recognised localities and through recognised community associations.

2. Summary

- 2.1. The Council is working with a wide range of partner organisations, in an attempt to help to minimise the spread of COVID-19. To achieve this, the Council has applied a resilient communities approach, providing civic leadership, to mobilise a public response through our vibrant voluntary and community sector, in recognised locality 'hub' areas. The approach supports shielded or vulnerable residents in self-isolation to stay safely at home and provides essential food to individuals and families in financial hardship, without building long-term dependency on the Council. It also aims to build long lasting connections between local residents, enhancing cohesion, neighbourliness, and reducing social isolation for vulnerable people.
- 2.2. To achieve this, it is recognised the Council needs to provide an additional £300,000 in grant funding, to be awarded to Community Associations, and other key voluntary sector organisations, in order to provide emergency support to shielded and vulnerable residents required to self-isolate due to the COVID-19 crisis. To also enable the Council to enter into contracts for the procurement of essential services, equipment and food, needed to support vulnerable individuals and families experiencing hardship due to the COVID-19 emergency in the months ahead, the Council needs to identify funding to a maximum of £733,000 to support such efforts.

3. Recommendations

3.1 That Cabinet approves:

1. The Director of Resilient Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Communities and Leisure, to distribute additional grant monies totalling £116,925 to community associations, or other key voluntary sector organisations, needed to facilitate the mobilisation of a public response to support vulnerable people to remain safely at home during the COVID-19 crisis (for the 12 week period from 23 March 2020 to 15 June 2020).
2. Retrospectively £183,075 in additional grant monies, which has already been committed to support community associations and other key voluntary sector organisations, needed to facilitate the mobilisation of a public response to support vulnerable people to remain safely at home during the Covid-19 crisis since 23 March 2020.
3. The Director of Resilient Communities entering into contracts for the procurement of essential services, equipment, and food, needed to support vulnerable individuals and families experiencing hardship, due to the COVID-19 emergency, up to a maximum of £733,000 for the 12 week period from 23 March 2020 to 15 June 2020.
4. The Director of Resilient Communities, in consultation with the relevant portfolio holders, to use any remaining balance of funds to extend the activities detailed in recommendation 1 and 2 beyond the initial 12 week period (should the need arise).
5. That a future report is brought to Cabinet on any extension of time and/or change to the operation of the model which might have amended and/or new resource implications for the Council.

4. Report detail - Know

- 4.1 The Council is working with a range of statutory and voluntary sector partner organisations to help minimise the spread of COVID-19. To achieve this, the Council has applied a resilient communities approach, providing civic leadership to help mobilise a public response via the voluntary, and community sector, in four locality areas.
- 4.2 The existing 'Making Connections Walsall initiative' has been expanded, to offer additional support for vulnerable residents and families who need to self-isolate during the COVID-19 emergency. Four Community Hubs are now operating across the following areas:
 1. **NORTH** - Bloxwich Community Partnership, (Bloxwich East, Bloxwich West, Birchills Leamore, Blakenall);
 2. **EAST** - Manor Farm Community Association (Walsall Pelsall, Brownhills, Aldridge North, Rushall-Shelfield and Walsall Wood, Aldridge South, Streetly, Pheasey Park Farm);
 3. **SOUTH** - Accord Age Matter's (St Matthews, Paddock, Palfrey, Pleck);

4. **WEST** - Old Hall Peoples Partnership (Bentley and Darlaston North, Darlaston South, Willenhall North, Short Heath, Willenhall South).
- 4.3 The Community Hub buildings are not open to the public. They receive referrals via email or via the Making Connections telephone line (which is answered by the West Midlands Fire Service). The main types of support offered by the 4 Community Hubs are:
- Befriending (telephone calls to people who need support or are lonely);
 - Shopping (which residents pay for)
 - Collection of prescriptions
 - Delivery of food parcels (only for individuals in significant financial hardship)
 - Other types of support for individuals in crisis e.g. collecting and delivering of free school meals for families self-isolating, arranging emergency boiler repairs, welfare benefits and financial advice are also offered (where appropriate).
- 4.4 The Community Hubs are being supported by a network of other community sector organisations, public and private organisations operating within locality areas. A team of dedicated volunteers are giving up their time to help and staff have also been deployed from the Council and from other partner organisations to support the civic response. One Walsall has been involved in the recruitment and selection of new volunteers and the Community Hubs have also used their existing volunteer databases.
- 4.5 The approach has been designed to support shielded or vulnerable residents in self-isolation to stay safely at home, without building long-term dependency on the Council. It is hoped that taking this approach will help to build long lasting connections between local residents, enhancing community cohesion, neighbourliness and helping to reduce social isolation for vulnerable people. The service is primarily aimed at individuals aged over 70 who have been advised by the government to self-isolate for 12 weeks. It also provides support to other vulnerable people believed to be at significant risk of contracting Covid-19 and individuals and families who are required to self-isolate due to a family member contracting the virus. Where individuals have family members or friends who can offer practical support with collecting food or prescriptions they are encouraged to access that help in the first instance.
- 4.6 On the 21 March 2020, the Government asked the NHS to write to 1.5m people nationally who were considered medical vulnerable. In that letter those vulnerable people, termed “shielded” were informed about the need to self-isolate themselves at home for a period of twelve weeks. Recipients of the letters were also offered the option of registering for a non-means tested free food delivery service to support them to remain in their home. The Council understands that 5,045 individuals have received an NHS shielded letter in Walsall. It is not yet known how many of these have or will formerly register with the national food assistance scheme.
- 4.7 The initial indication given from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) was that Local Authorities would be responsible for delivering food parcels to NHS shielded individuals who receive a letter. Accordingly, Council officers took urgent action to set up Sneyd Community

Association as a food distribution hub, with 24 hour access to the building and security on site. The Government then changed the design of the national food distribution scheme and instead arranged for home deliveries to go directly to shielded individuals homes (via two major commercial catering suppliers Brakes and Bidfoods).

- 4.8 Whilst the Council is not now responsible for delivering most of the food to the individuals on the NHS 'shielded' list, we have been asked to supply and deliver emergency food parcels directly to shielded individuals who do not receive their food parcel when expected from the government suppliers. Due to the level of failure in the national food distribution system, Council officers are therefore spending a large amount of time monitoring and responding to issues raised by shielded individuals to ensure that they are not placed at risk. It should be noted, that the experience in Walsall, mirrors issues being voiced across the country, so we are not unique.
- 4.9 Local residents on the NHS shielded list are raising concerns about the quality and quantity of food contained in the national food parcels from Brakes and Bidfoods. The Community Hubs are regularly now being asked to provide individuals on the NHS shielded list with supplementary food to sustain them between government deliveries. In some cases, this is because residents run out of food before their next delivery date, in other cases, it is because the standard parcels do not meet the special dietary requirements of the recipients.
- 4.10 On 18 March 2015, Cabinet approved a local Crisis Support Scheme that offers emergency assistance to individuals impacted by financial crisis and hardship. The scheme is usually administered by the Money Home Job team via the First Stop Shop or via the Housing and Welfare Support telephone line and delivered with significant support from the local voluntary and community sector. The closure of the First Stop shop has meant that many requests for emergency crisis assistance are now going through the Making Connections system and into the Community Hubs. Whilst there is already a non-recurrent grant budget aligned to the Crisis Support fund, which has been used to help support the Community Hubs to date, the unprecedented increase in demand for food during Covid-19 means that this money will soon run out. If the existing Crisis Support budget is not replenished, and no additional funds are identified to meet the increased demand due to Covid-19, the Council will have no way of supporting vulnerable people in hardship in the future. As a result many vulnerable families and homeless people could be placed at risk should they face a crisis that leads to a sudden loss of income. This in turn may place demand risk on other Council services without crisis funding being available.
- 4.11 Due to the unprecedented and increasing level of demand for emergency food parcels through the Community Hubs, a decision was taken on 14 April 2020, to re-open the central delivery and distribution hub at Sneyd Community Centre. It was felt that this was essential to support our local efforts to help people in financial hardship and to encourage the public to remain safely at home to prevent the spread of the virus. The decision also took account of the fact that local Food Banks had seen a 30% increase in demand for food parcels and were struggling with food supply themselves (due to a drop in the number of donations received). Removing the need to shop and build food parcels from the Community Hubs has enabled them to focus their efforts on other essential activities. Local and National data supports the local experience that financial hardship is significantly increasing

amongst local Walsall residents as the Covid-19 crisis goes on and the government lock down measures remain in place. A report detailing the increasing numbers of local residents accessing welfare benefits and other financial support is included as **Appendix A**.

- 4.12 The Community hubs were set up at pace and were developed in a “live environment”. One of the challenges to making this work has been the significant pressure on the financial resources of the Community Associations involved in operating the Hubs and their associated partners. The resilient community model relies on there being a vibrant voluntary and community sector and there has been significant concern about the sectors ability to continue to mobilise to meet the needs of vulnerable people as the lock down extends. Many of our local organisations have faced the unenviable decision of ceasing activities, to take advantage of the government’s furlough scheme, so that they can ensure the long-term viability of their organisations after the Covid-19 crisis. Although the government has recently responded by announcing new government grant money for the voluntary and community sector, there is still a lack of clarity about who will be able to successfully apply and when it will become available to be spent by the sector. In the interim period, the Council has needed to step in, to meet the additional costs of essential staff, to avoid the closure of the Community Hub infrastructure – which would have a damaging long term impact on the Borough. Although some staff have been, and others will be furloughed, the additional £300,000 grant funding will ensure that essential workers and buildings remain in place. This will enable volunteers to continue to turn up and be coordinated to support vulnerable people in the community to stay at home. Taking this approach will keep more people safe by helping to reduce the spread of Covid19 and lessen the impact on the NHS and colleagues working in social care settings. Council staff and staff resources from partners including West Midlands Fire Service and Walsall Housing Group (whg), have also been deployed to support the Community Hub and Sneyd food distribution activities.
- 4.14 The process for referrals to a hub has now been mapped. Referrals are received either by telephone to the West Midlands Fire Service or through e-mails to a COVID-19 e-mail address. Requests for support are then sent to one of the four community hubs for action.
- 4.13 The additional funding to the voluntary and community sector, will be used to:
- Initially kick start the hubs and other food providers to meet the initial capacity for food.
 - To support the infrastructure of key hub organisations.
 - To provide food provision based on dietary need.

Commitments to date has been £183,075.00.

Initial Kick start - The initial design phase of the community response to Covid-19 saw food provision being sourced through the Community Hubs. Three of the four hubs had capacity to prepare and distribute hardship food parcels but not the funding available. In the case of the fourth hub, Accord Age Matters, a partner organisation, Nash Dom, was identified who could prepare and distribute hardship food parcels.

Key Hub Organisations – The Council has been in discussions with all of the Community Hubs to understand and agree the additional resourcing required to support them during the lockdown period. Issues such as the need to furlough staff, ongoing viability of organisations in relation to the period of lockdown and the capability of staff and volunteers were all taken into account when agreeing a funding package to ensure the delivery of the expanded hub service.

Specialist food providers – Funding has been agreed with some community groups providing different dietary provision.

During the Covid-19 lockdown many local organisations have sprung up outside of the Making Connections Walsall infrastructure. These organisations are providing a valuable service but many are using diminishing donations or reserves to fund the provision of food to vulnerable people in their communities. It is expected that additional grants will be required to support these organisations which complement the main response to the Covid-19 crisis.

4.14 A West Midlands group meets, initially on a daily basis, to discuss Council's responses to supporting vulnerable people. This allows for the sharing of best practice, ideas and issues relating to the emergency food response to COVID-19. For the 2nd tier of vulnerable people, those not on the Government's shielded list but vulnerable or in self-isolation, Council's in the West Midlands have applied local solutions to the same issue and the current position is as follows:

- Birmingham City Council issue approximately 10,000 food parcels a week;
- Dudley have a model which delivers approximately 800 food parcels per week through a combination of VCS, community, foodbank and council provision. Dudley also provide a "shopping service" similar to that provided through Making Connections Walsall;
- Wolverhampton deliver approximately 2500 food parcels per week from a central hub;
- Sandwell are delivering approximately 800 food parcels per week:

West Midlands Councils, through the regional Vulnerable People forum are discussing a shared approach to food supply.

Council Corporate Plan priorities

4.15 This proposal supports the Council's urgent and emergency response to the Covid 19 pandemic and the role the Council plays in providing Civic Leadership and mobilising the public to support our community response to Covid-19.

4.16 This proposal links to the Council's corporate priority 'Communities are prospering and resilient'. It supports the most vulnerable to be protected from avoidable harm, by enabling them to stay safely at home, and takes pressure off the NHS and social care colleagues. It will also enhance the quality of life for many people who are suffering ill-health and are socially isolated.

4.17 The proposal also links to emergency planning and resilience. By taking action to mobilise the voluntary and community sector to be part of the Covid-19 response, we are seeking the best set of outcomes for local residents, achieving cost effectiveness and delivering sustainable outcomes.

Risk management

- 4.18 There are no alternative options currently for local people requiring support to remain safely self-isolating where they do not have family or friends to help them. If the supply chain in food is eased by regional / national initiatives then our local food banks may be able to scale-up their support to local residents in hardship, which may reduce the pressure on our centralised food distribution hub at Sneyd. The amount requested is based on upper, and lower, thresholds modelled from past and future estimated costs. It is also based on existing cohorts of Walsall residents who have received NHS shielded letters.
- 4.19 The monitoring of the expenditure will continue to be overseen by both the Resilient Communities, and MHJ team, procurement and finance colleagues. The agenda is also discussed regularly as part of the COVID-19 chain of command groups (SILVER and GOLD), which has representatives of all internal Stakeholders responsible for delivering safe outcomes as a result of COVID-19.
- 4.20 Failure to provide additional grant funding to the Community and Voluntary Sector to support the mobilisation of the public response through the use of volunteers is likely to mean that they have to furlough their staff which would significantly impeded their ability to provide ongoing support to the Council as part of the Resilient Communities model during Covid-19,

Financial implications

- 4.21 The report recommends that additional **£300,000** grant funding is made available to award to Community Associations and other key voluntary sector organisations needed to provide emergency support to shielded and vulnerable residents required to self-isolate due to the COVID-19 crisis.
- 4.22 The report also seeks approval for the Council to enter into contracts for the procurement of essential services, equipment and food, needed to support vulnerable individuals and families experiencing hardship due to the COVID-19 emergency, up to a maximum of **£733,000**. The figure included in this report is based on the Sneyd distribution Centre needing to provide 18,000 free food parcels over a 12 week period (approximately 1500 per week).
- 4.23 Demand for food parcels in the week ending 24 April 2020 in fact was only 900, but demand is gradually going up as the long-term financial impact of the crisis continues and more referrals are received into the Making Connections service. Many residents appear to need on-going weekly parcels for a number of weeks until their welfare benefits begin to be paid (which means we predict there will be a cumulative weekly increase in demand for food parcels). If demand for food parcels remains at current levels the costs would reduce to approximately £481,000.
- 4.24 The government has agreed in principle that costs associated with the Covic-19 crisis will be covered centrally, but there is currently no certainty that the Council will be able to recover the full cost of this type of initiative.

- 4.25 On 08 April 2020 the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced £750 million to assist charities in their response to the Covid-19 outbreak. It stated that “£360 million will be directly allocated by government departments to charities providing key services and supporting vulnerable people during the crisis. As well as this, £370 million for small and medium-sized charities, including through a grant to the National Lottery Community Fund for those in England, will support those organisations at the heart of local communities which are making a big difference during the outbreak, including those delivering food, essential medicines and providing financial advice.” It is therefore possible that local charities may be able to make a claim from the £370m portion of the funding, for some of the food / shopping / prescription / befriending services mentioned in this report. However, as stated earlier in the report, the Council had to put these services in place in March 2020, at the outset of the COVID-19 outbreak and prior to the 08 April announcement, and the subsequent timelag for an application process to be put in place. The report therefore seeks approval to provide additional grant funding in the short term, prior to any confirmation of external grant funding being successfully allocated to local community and voluntary sector charities.
- 4.26 Council officers will continue to encourage local charitable organisations to apply for the government announced funding package, and if appropriate, will seek reimbursement of the additional grant funding provided by the Council (up to a maximum of the extra grant aid awarded). The Council and One Walsall are already providing support to local organisations to help them to maximise their chances of gaining additional external funding to support local people.

Procurement Implications/Social Value

- 4.27 The Value of the contracts referred to in this report will in the main fall below the current EU Threshold for Supplies (£189,330). If crisis demand for food continues at the unprecedented rates currently being experienced, or increases further, it is likely that costs would exceed these thresholds. Expenditure on food supply as part of the COVID-19 response, in these exceptional times are covered by specific regulations and procurement will work with the service area to ensure that expenditure is compliant with those regulations.

Legal Implications

- 4.28 The Council already has a Crisis Support Scheme, which was approved by Cabinet on 19 March 2015. Provision of crisis support through the Community Hubs is currently being given in accordance with that scheme. The MHJ team will continue to work with the procurement section to ensure that it secures best value in relation to ongoing purchases of food and that this is done in accordance with the council’s financial and contractual rules.

Health and wellbeing implications

- 4.29 Taking a proactive approach to support vulnerable and shielded individuals to remain safe at home during the Covid-19 pandemic will reduce the risk of harm experienced by community members and take the pressure off the NHS and social care colleagues.

- 4.30 It is not in the public interest, nor that of the Community and Voluntary Sector Providers, not to support the ongoing public or civic response to Covid-19 that has been mobilised through the Community Hubs.

Staffing implications

- 4.31 There are no staffing implications arising out of this report.

Reducing Inequalities

- 4.32 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been completed and can be found as Appendix B to this report.

Consultation

- 4.33 Due to the scale and speed of the Covid-19 emergency, the Council and partners have had to set up the Community Hub infrastructure in a live environment. As a result, it has been very difficult to do formal consultation. That said, there has been many discussions with customers and key partners during the co-design process and the result is a service that is currently receiving and meeting high levels of demand effectively.

5. Decide

- 5.1. Cabinet is requested to consider the content of this report and to agree the recommendations as outlined in section 3.

6 Respond

- 6.1. It is recognised this agreement takes us to mid-June and not beyond. It may be that a future Cabinet report is needed to consider any extension or reduction of this model. In the meantime, plans are in place to continuously review the operation of this model to ensure it reflects need, and can respond to government changes that might arise as a result of national recovery plans
- 6.2. Discussions will continue with the MHCLG, and with the charities, with the aim of trying to secure full clarity and agreement about recovery of costs associated with supporting people impacted by the Covid-19 crisis.

7. Review

- 7.1. The arrangements with regards to the Community Hubs and Food Distribution Centre will be managed and reviewed in line with ordinary Council procedures. The monitoring of the expenditure will continue to be overseen by Resilient Communities, MHJ, procurement and finance colleagues.
- 7.2. The existing grant arrangements with the voluntary and community groups who receive the additional grant money will be amended (to reflect the change in their duties). The specifications and performance frameworks will also be amended to ensure that Community Hubs respond effectively to the needs of local residents and that data is shared with the Council in a timely way, so that officers can respond to emerging needs.

- 7.3. The agenda is also discussed regularly as part of the COVID-19 chain of command groups (SILVER and GOLD), which has representatives of all internal Stakeholders responsible for delivering safe outcomes as a result of COVID-19. An operational group also meets twice a week, which acts as a Civil Leadership operational steering group (bringing together external key partners including representatives from the community and voluntary sector, whg, the Police, One Walsall and colleagues from various Council departments).
- 7.4. The Council is also sharing our experiences and thoughts through the Local Government Association to help shape future Government approaches.

Background papers

Appendix A – Covid-19 Impact, Financial Hardship Indicators for Walsall
Appendix B – Equality Impact Assessment

Author

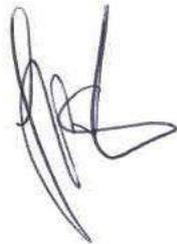
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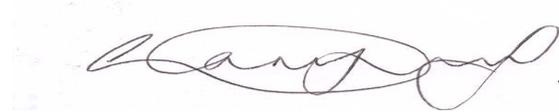
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Director of Resilient Communities



Simon Neilson
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6 May 2020



Councillor G Perry
Resilient Communities

11 May 2020



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11 May 2020

Covid-19

Impact on benefits, finances, housing and jobs



Walsall Council

PROUD OF OUR PAST OUR PRESENT AND FOR OUR FUTURE

Summary: 1

The new schemes introduced by Government do provide some support.

There will be many customers financially disadvantaged that will require additional support.

Since the 16 March 2020 both DWP and Councils have seen dramatic increases in demand.

- **Universal Credit (UC):** Nationally 950,000 new universal credit claims submitted in the past fortnight (800% to 900% higher than normal rate), Walsall is getting around 3,000 claims per week
- **Housing Benefit (HB) and/or Council Tax Reduction (CTR) applications:** 60% increase in March 20 (1,005) compared to Jan / Feb in Walsall.
- **Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs):** Walsall Applications increased by 10% (March 2019 to March 2020) Spend March 2020 is 12% higher than March 2019. We expect further increases in applications and spend as we have identified 9,779 households who potentially have been affected and will need additional support in addition to the new claims from people who were not claiming prior to COVID 19.

Summary: 2

Increase in homeless presentations / applications: combination of economic and social issues are expected to dramatically increase demand for help especially post lockdown

Housing Evictions – 3 month eviction ban commenced mid March which mean that there is likely to be significant demand for help from end June onwards:

- More council tax reduction applications and spend and or
- Housing support (emergency accommodation and homelessness applications)

Rogue landlords will continue to be rogue! Covid-19 won't improve their behaviour and there are likely to be many vulnerable tenants impacted by their actions over the coming weeks.

Domestic Abuse:

- More women and girls will be abused and are at risk in this period. Every pandemic and major disaster has found this.
- Nationally deaths have doubled.
- Expected to be a surge in demand for help when lockdown lifts.

Summary: 3

Impacts of COVID-19 on vulnerable children

- **in temporary accommodation in UK – Lancet article.** We are seeking to provide additional support to families with young children especially the most at risk (the under 5-year olds). National data suggests that 34% of children live in poverty in the UK (Social Metrics Commission, 2019). It is estimated that 41% of children in Walsall live in poverty once housing costs are taken into account, equating to around 30,551 children (End Child Poverty, 2019)

Impact of Covid-19 is NOT equal: Impact on residents and communities from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds is higher. Impact in Walsall expected to be higher as a result than many councils.

One of the main risks for vulnerable customers is access to food:

Inequality of access to food and healthy food for vulnerable families: for example;

- Ø how do you get online shopping when you have no ICT, no WIFI and or no credit or debit card!
- Ø The pressures we all face getting our shopping are exacerbated for vulnerable families

Impact on foodbanks: many of our vulnerable customers rely on foodbanks, and there is a major concern that access to food through this route will be severely impacted by less contributions received, and the ability to retain enough volunteers

Government measures to support customers in the coronavirus crisis - 1

Customers on benefits

- £20 per week increase to Working tax credit basic amount
- £20 increase to Universal Credit standard allowance
- Local Housing Allowances increased to the lowest 30th percentile of market rents
- Housing Benefit additional earnings disregard increased by £20 per week
- Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) now payable from day 1 instead of day 7
- Department of Works and Pensions (DWP) have stopped all overpayment recovery action
- There has been a number of changes to definitions within various benefits/tax credits to ensure customers effected by coronavirus can either claim or continue to receive benefits if they are now unable to work

Universal credit customers not in unemployment or those continuing with their employment as normal during Coronavirus outbreak will not be financially disadvantaged. The impact for these customers will be the following:

- Have they been maintaining payment of bills during the crisis?
- How is their mental health following periods of lockdown?

These are predicted to be future demands for help when landlords etc will re commence proceedings for arrears, every year Walsall spends it's full allocation of DHP funding from the DWP without a national crisis such as Coronavirus.

Measures - 2

Employed

- Coronavirus Job retention scheme
- Statutory sick pay payable from day 1 not day 4

Self-employed

- Self-employed income support scheme
- Minimum Income Floor suspended in Universal Credit

Other initiatives

- £500 million Council Tax hardship fund
- Free school meal voucher scheme
- Social/Private landlords will not be able to start proceedings to evict tenants for at least a 3 month period – and 3 month mortgage payment holiday
- £750 million support package to charities
- £3.2m emergency fund for rough sleeping – Walsall allocated £4.5k
- £1.6bn for local authorities – mainly for social care but also for homelessness and rough sleeping – Walsall allocated £9.6m
- £3m for food redistribution organisations

Customers still dramatically impacted

- Low paid workers are most vulnerable
- Workers on zero hour contracts, temporary workers and self-employed are most likely to be affected economically by coronavirus
- Customers with no recourse to public funds – there are calls to allow those who are now unable to work because of covid19 to have immediate access to welfare support
- Charities call for the government to temporarily remove legal barriers to homelessness provision and make clear that everyone who is homeless is eligible for assistance - regardless of priority need, intentionality, local connection, or immigration status
- Resolution Foundation say that despite measures put in place a huge number of people are still going to lose their jobs and need immediate income support to avoid hardship

Impact - 1

8 April **Government stated**

- Coronavirus has had profound effects on the UK economy and on household finances
- Up to one fifth of employees may be absent from work during the outbreak
- Existing data suggests inactivity and unemployment will rise quickly – there are already signs of a spike in unemployment
- This will translate into a rapid upsurge in benefit claims and an increased reliance on the social security system

1 April **Departments of Works and Pensions (DWP) disclosed there had been:**

- 1.8 million declarations for new claims received in last 6 weeks up to 12.4.20 for universal credit claims – this is 5 times higher than the average
- Many customers have spent hours trying to phone welfare staff, many gave up after long phone queues and then being rejected by the system. One user reported spending more than 15 hours in total over three days waiting to speak to a benefits official. A report on 9 April confirms
- 30 March 2.2M telephone calls made to DWP
- 31 March 1.8M telephone calls made to DWP
- A user posted a screenshot showing there were 105,563 people ahead of them in an online queue to verify their identity

Impact - 2

- Resolution Foundation predicts that the eventual rise in unemployment will be at least as large as, and much swifter than, that seen during the financial crisis.
- Another report highlights that a quarter of those eligible for the Self-employment Income Support Scheme will need financial help before the grant arrives in/or after June 2020
- British Chambers of Commerce survey - More than a third of firms have said they plan to furlough most or all of their staff over the next week.
- Findings suggest that at least a third of the private sector workforce will be furloughed and paid through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, costing as much as £40bn over the next three months

Impact - 3

- The Confederation of British Industry (CBI) said on 15 April it is worried companies will be forced to start redundancy procedures this Saturday to comply with the minimum 45-day consultation period.
- Food banks are coming under severe strain
- Charities are also under severe strain
- 27% of businesses reported reduced staffing levels
- New weekly job vacancies have fallen by about a third

Impact on Food Banks

- Food Banks operate independently to the four Hubs in Walsall and referrals are received from a number of locations such as the Beacon Centre, Housing First, Crisis Support, and Social Workers
- The Black Country Food Bank has seen a 30% increase in Food Bank usage based on the two weeks prior to lockdown
- They have had to limit vouchers to one per week (this provides 3 days worth of food) and limit to a maximum family size of 4.
- There has been an increase in usage by single people that could be attributed to families receiving Free School Meals vouchers or support via the Hubs instead



- The chart on the left predicts the increase in foodbank vouchers requested based on those issued in February and March 2020
- It is anticipated there may be a reduction the following week as those who claimed Universal Credit in March start to receive their first payment
- 335 people have been helped via Ablewell food bank since 1st April 2020
- Restrictions at supermarkets have hampered attempts to keep Ablewell stocked and they are still low on fruit juice and various tinned goods
- Ablewell have advised if people can get to a Food Bank they should to relieve pressure on the Hubs to help those who are vulnerable and housebound

Economic Impact Nationally

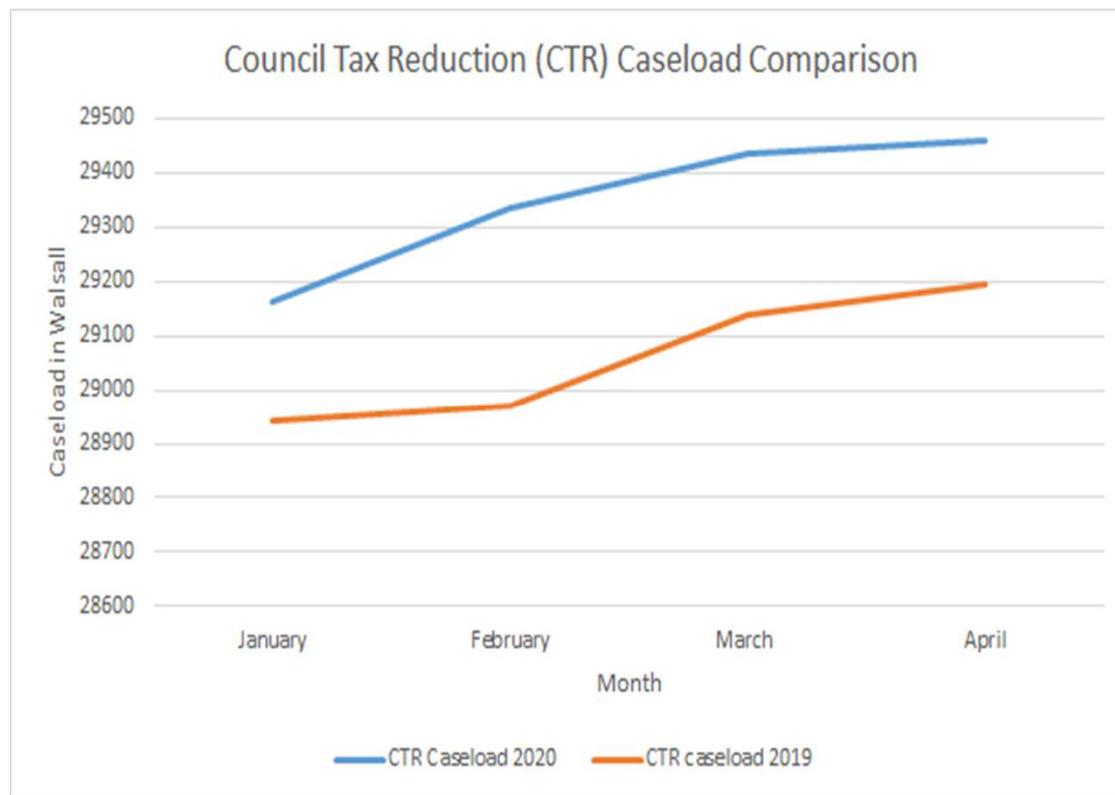
There are currently limited figures available.
Those that are, are from a few weeks ago.

A House of Commons briefing (1 April 20) quoted data collected on 25 March 20:

- 57% of workers were engaged in less paid work over the past week than usual
- 8% of workers had already lost their job due to coronavirus
- Expected probability of job loss within next 4 months is 33%
- Workers expect to earn 35% less in the next 4 months on average
- There is a 49% chance of them having problems paying their bills
- The young and low-income earners have been hit the hardest

It is predicted things will continue to get worse while restrictions continue to remain in place.

Impact on Council Tax Reduction caseload

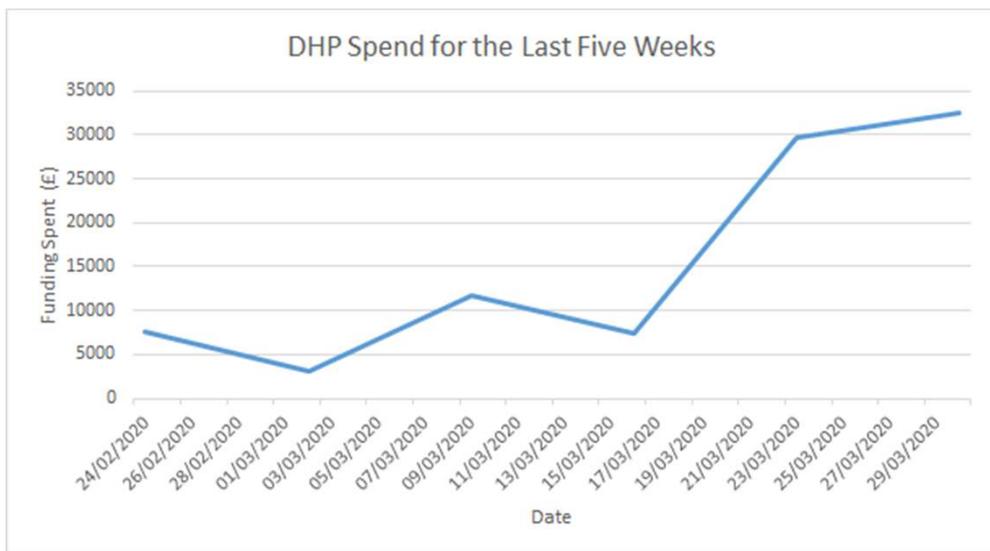


- The Council Tax Reduction (CTR) costs have increased by £360,000 since 1 March 2020 due to the requests for additional support and change in circumstances associated with the Coronavirus outbreak
- CTR caseload has risen by 1% since January 2020
- The impact on CTR caseload is not reflective currently, there is a high number of applications outstanding with Universal Credit and this will increase over the coming weeks.
- This will be monitored weekly to measure the impact of the high increase in new applications
- The total cost of the CTR scheme for 2020/21 is £13.3 million

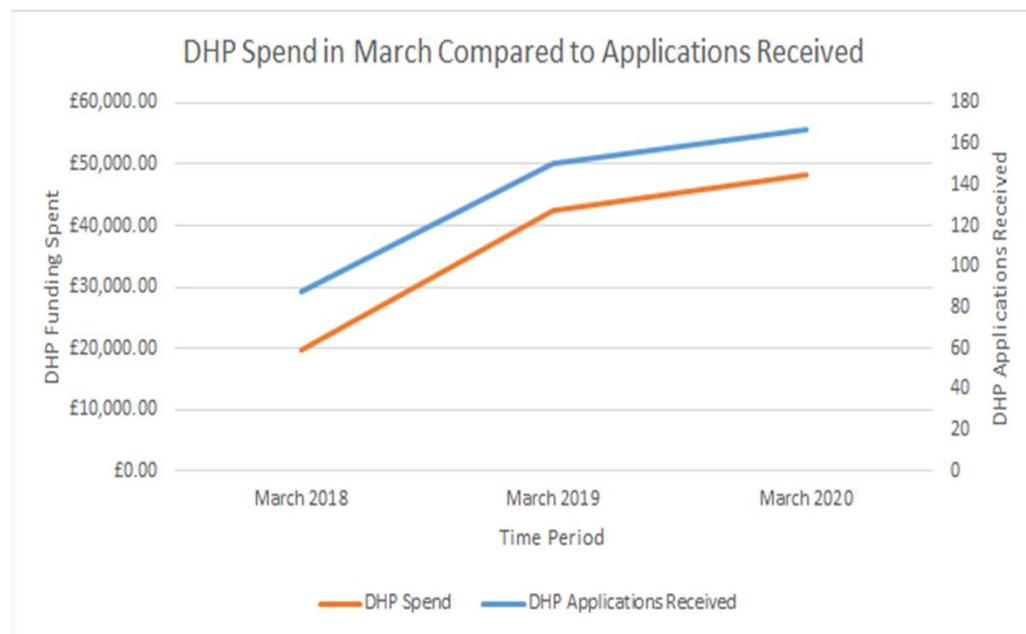
Slide 13

DL2 1% and 0.88% are almost the same - what are the caseload numbers? i ehow many addiotnal cases
David Lockwood, 15/04/2020

Impact on Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)



- DHP spending has increased significantly since 19 March
- Funding for the financial year 2020/21 has increased to £988,560 which is a 18% increase on previous year's funding



Data shows for March year on year increase in:

- the amount of DHP funding spent and
- number of applications received

We will continue to monitor weekly spend and number of applications received to help understand the ongoing impact of the pandemic.

Slide 14

BC1 Not sure if It would be pertinent to know how many are a result of UC
Bernard Cysewski, 16/04/2020

Effects on Housing Evictions in Walsall: 1

The new rules implemented by central government regarding evictions do two things:

1. Extend the notice period for evictions
2. Suspend eviction court action until at least 25 June 2020

All court proceedings for eviction are on hold regardless of when the landlord applied to court. This means most tenants can't be evicted before the end of June at the earliest.

There are implications that Walsall Council may face if customers do not:

- clear the arrears themselves,
- or notify us they need help.

We expect closer to 25 June:

- an increase in DHP requests and or
- an increase customer demand for Housing support from those facing eviction.

Effects on Housing Evictions in Walsall: 2

Quote from a registered social landlord (RPs) in Walsall

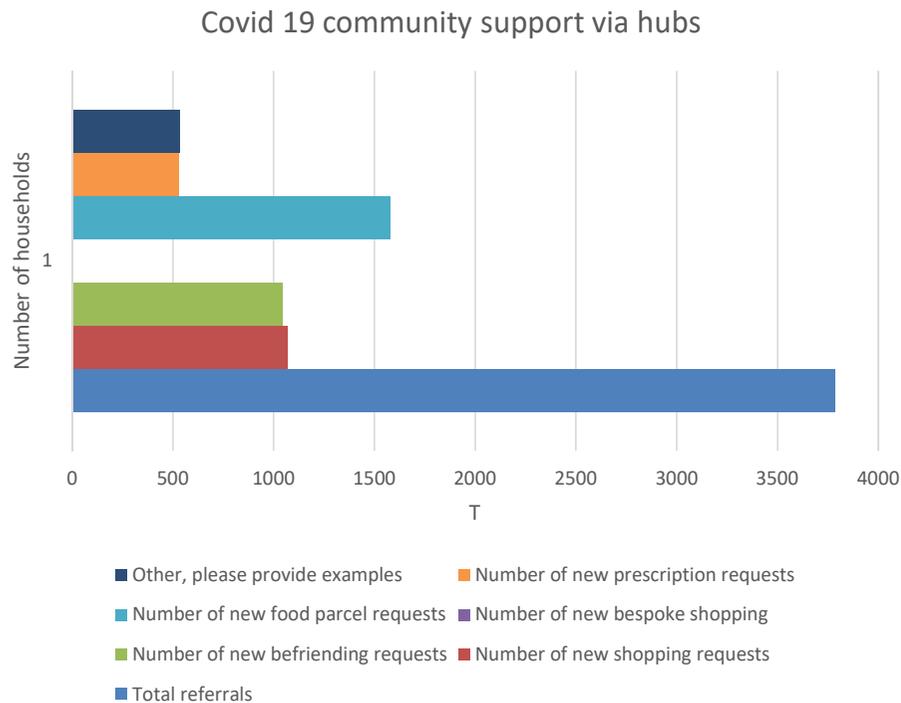
‘Early analysis shows that we have seen a sharp rise in cases where Tenants are self-employed or never claimed out of work benefits and now are unable to pay rent’

As of 16th April, a number of RPs have confirmed that they have seen arrears rising, although it is too early to fully analyse the trend and impact.

We will also need to model the potential impact on PRS legal (and illegal) evictions and homeowner repossessions as both will be expected to increase.

Rogue landlords are unlikely to get better – they will continue to ignore tenants needs, break the law and undertake unlawful evictions. Many will use the lockdown as an excuse to do even less to help their tenants.

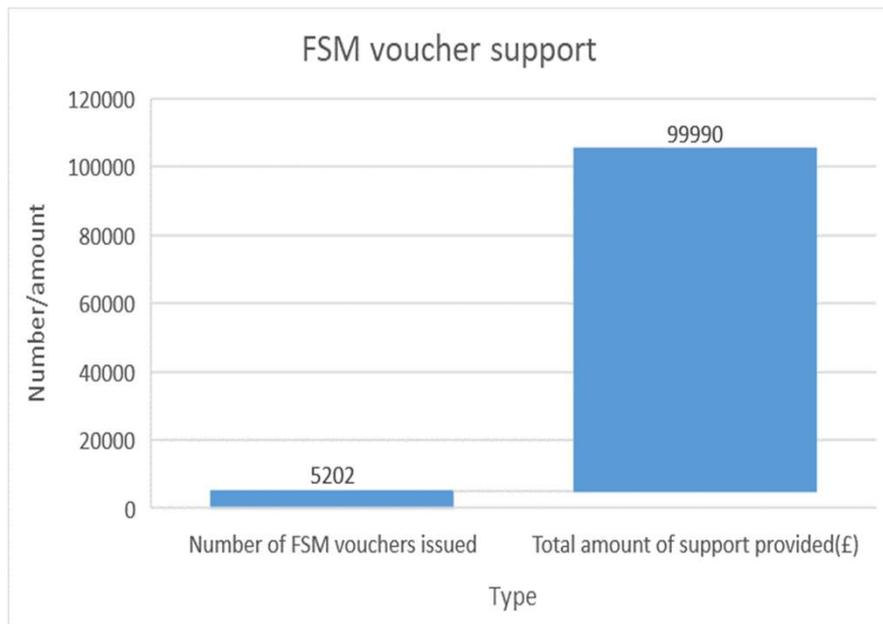
Community impact and support



Since the commencement of lockdown on 23.3.20 the 4 community hubs have been providing support for households affected by COVID 19 outbreak

- 3786 households have requested help and support (data 21.4.20)
- 1577 households have requested food parcels, this is in addition to NHS food parcels
- 1068 households have requested help with shopping
- 1043 requests for befriending due to isolation
- 526 requests for help with prescriptions
- 533 other requests which include financial advice
- The number of requests per week are consistently around 800 – 900

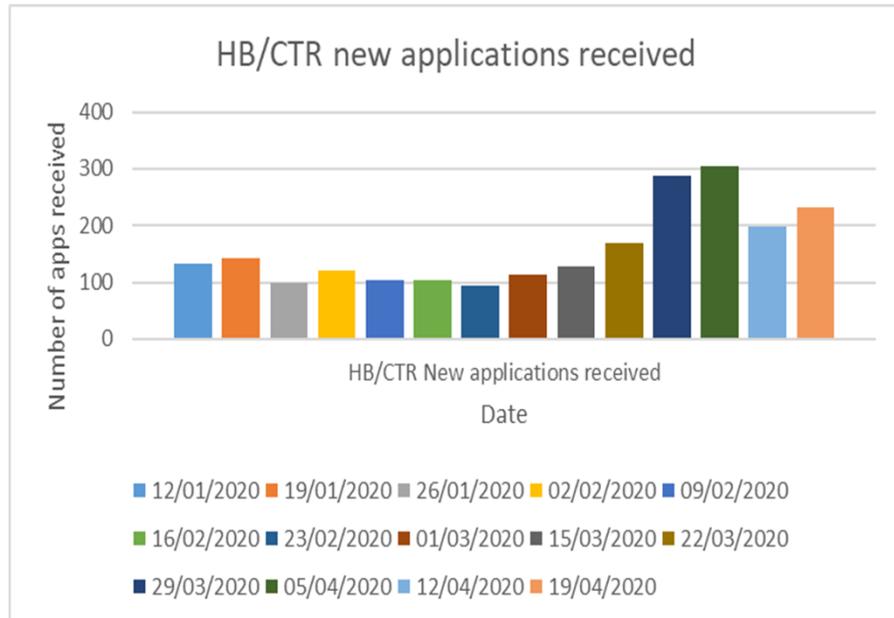
Free School meals impact



Impact since schools closed on 23.03.2020:

- 440 new FSM on-application forms/enquiries from parents received and processed
- 660 new potential eligible cases are being assessed
- Issues with school's authority does not cater for, increased contact – proactively supporting schools
- Problems with national voucher scheme leading to schools asking for help directly from the authority
- In addition to this we have issued 5202 vouchers through our own scheme providing £99,990 of support to households in Walsall

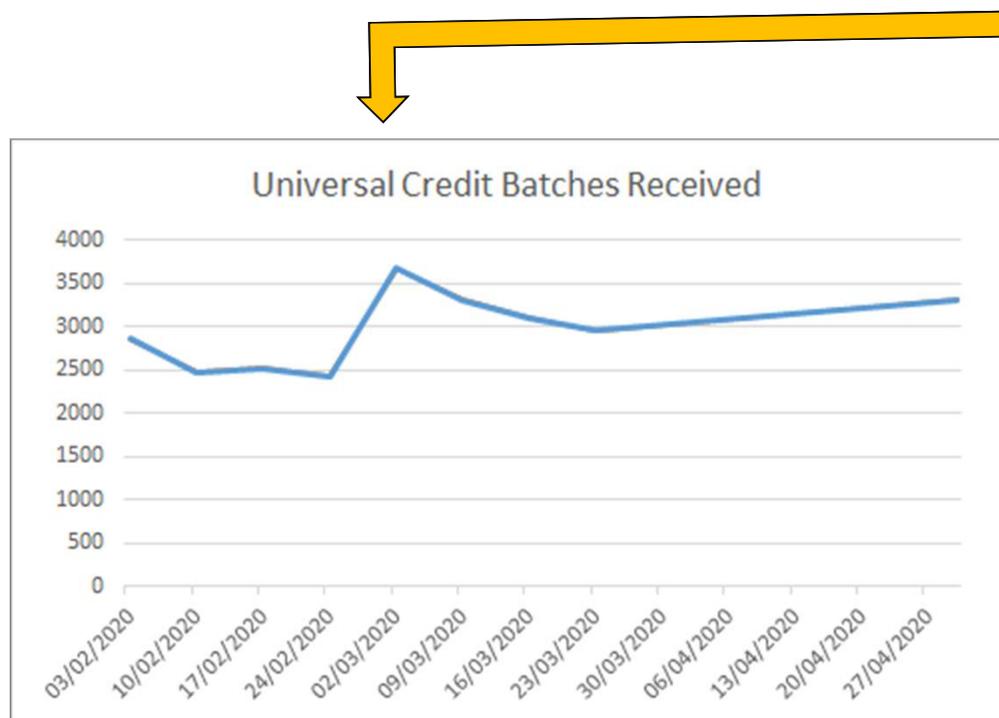
Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction New Applications Received



Key Facts:

- For Jan and Feb 2020 the average number of new claims received was 397
- This increased to **1,005 in March 2020 a 60% increase**
- The number of claims have continued to increase week on week since 1/3/2020 and are continuing to be higher than normal intake and is expected to continue
- Within these new applications are customers who have never claimed benefits before and their lifestyle and monthly expenditure will be higher – resulting in a dramatic reduction in income, this will be a cohort that will require additional temporary support.

Universal Credit (UC) notifications received



UC notifications received **increased the week following the announcement of lockdown**, this shows customers were starting to report changes or make new applications following being financially affected.

These notifications will have an impact on the cost of the CTR scheme, dependent on their circumstances a need for additional support to meet their monthly expenditure may also be required.

We are now receiving on average **3,000+ notifications per week** and are expecting this figure to continually rise as DWP have more staff processing the increase in Universal Credit claims.

Slide 20

DL1 do we have data for same period last year?

David Lockwood, 15/04/2020

Understanding our current CTR caseload

Our proactive action

We have analysed earnings and self-employment claims to predict the percentage of our caseload that may be affected financially by the Coronavirus outbreak:

We have an overall CTR caseload of 29,474

As pensioners should not be financially affected, we have deducted this element from our potential caseload –

This leaves us with a **working age CTR caseload of 18,486**

Understanding our current CTR caseload – Analysis of Income Types

We have analysed income types and this indicates the following will be financially impacted:

- **3,277 Universal Credit households with earnings**
Potential change to income each month if not on maximum amount of Universal Credit
- **5784 Claims with earnings**
Potential furloughed cases (only receiving 80% of pay) or new Universal Credit claims
- **718 Self-employed claims**
A high proportion of our self-employed caseload will not qualify for SEISS due to not completing tax returns. This will mean making a claim for Universal Credit.
Note: Self-employed customers who do qualify for SEISS will have to wait until June 2020 to receive income from this scheme, Many will need help during this time.

9,779 households potentially financially affected by lockdown restrictions

This results in 53% of our Working age CTR caseload.

In addition to this there is also an increase in new applications being currently received. .

Domestic Abuse – Expected increases being felt already

“Services must prepare for the “inevitable surge” of domestic abuse victims seeking support when the lockdown lifts.”

Nicole Jacobs, the Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales

“The mass experience of isolation measures, the diversion and repurposing of public services to respond to Covid-19, and the existing vulnerability of many women and girls at a time of less protection is a potential crisis. More women and girls will be abused and are at risk in this period. Every pandemic and major disaster has found this.”

Excerpt from open letter to Prime Minister from the Women's Aid Federation of England:

<https://www.womensaid.org.uk/covid-19-an-open-letter-to-the-prime-minister/>

Domestic Abuse – Deaths Double Nationally

“Coronavirus may exacerbate triggers, though I might prefer to call them excuses. Lockdown may restrict some women’s access to support or escape and it may even curtail measures some men take to keep their own violence under control” Karen Ingala Smith, the founder of Counting Dead Women,

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/apr/15/domestic-abuse-killings-more-than-double-amid-covid-19-lockdown>

Homelessness – Increases expected to be slightly masked

We are finding that numbers are not 'spiking yet' for a range of reasons:

- Ability for landlords (private and social) to issue Section 21 evictions has been suspended until June 2020 – this has halted demand for re-housing from this source
- The block on Section 21 is also unfortunately likely to lead to an increase in rent arrears as households either choose or struggle to make regular rent payments
- Some people are tending to 'stay put' through these very 'new times'
- Government mortgage holiday whilst helping some initially to avoid loss of home it is expected that when this ends there will be an increase due to those who have struggled to maintain payments / agree payment terms
- Increase in domestic violence cases during lockdown is likely to lead to a surge in applications when lockdown is lifted

Impact of Covid-19 on Vulnerable children in temporary accommodation

Lancet article 31 March 2020. Significant extra risks to children 5 years of age and younger. "Many children already do not reach development potential or struggle to grow and develop because of multilevel barriers, including those resulting from poverty or homelessness. However, COVID-19 has added a whole new layer of risk. "

Article identified range of areas of concern. Many are not as relevant for Walsall as we continue to provide temporary accommodation for families principally in self-contained properties some concerns remain including:

- Critical need to ensure sufficient additional resources for soap and disinfectants for families;
- No face-to-face contact with general practitioners and health outreach services is available, including health visitors, limits routine checks such as early identification of need and risk, health and development reviews with screening assessments, immunisations, promotion of social and emotional development, support for parenting, promotion of health and behavioural change, prevention of obesity, and promotion of breastfeeding
- For these families, access to basic essentials (eg, food, nappies) is scarce, with no resources to shop online and many charities and dropins now closed.
- Risks to parental mental health are increased, especially among single mothers, given that housing instability is associated with an increased risk of depression in mothers.

Inequality of access to food and healthy food for vulnerable families

Online shopping: Most vulnerable families have no / limited access to online food and essentials shopping facilities which require:

- ICT
- Internet / WIFI
- Credit or debit cards or similar via online banking
- ICT skills to navigate systems

As many vulnerable households will not have previously made use of on-line shopping even if they have all the above their ability to quickly access / benefit from it will be limited due to the significant growth in demand from other households and the competing demands upon their time.

Access to shops: Vulnerable households especially single parents will have been more severely impacted by the changes in retailing. The pressures that all of us have faced to access food shopping will have been exacerbated for those who must also consider / have to take their children with them to que to access shops for food.

Food banks: Demand is significant

Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) residents and communities

There's a disproportionate percentage of BAME people getting ill.

“We have heard the virus does not discriminate between individuals but there's no doubt there appears to be a manifest disproportionate severity of infection in BAME people and doctors. This has to be addressed – the government must act now.”

Statement by Chair of British Medical Association

Not only are BAME communities disproportionately impacted by health inequalities, the economic impact is likely to hit them harder too, with [rates of poverty in BAME communities being twice that of their white counterparts](#).

BAME residents in Walsall comprise 23% (2011 census) compared to 14% of the population of England and Wales.

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) for Policies, Procedures and Services

Proposal name	Providing Civil Leadership and Mobilising the Public – Covid 19		
Directorate	Resources and Transformation		
Service	Money Home Job		
Responsible Officer	Elise Hopkins		
Proposal planning start	March 2020	Proposal start date (due or actual date)	March 2020

1	What is the purpose of the proposal?	Yes / No	New / revision
	Show which category the proposal is and whether it is new or a revision.		
	Policy	Yes	New
	Procedure		
	Guidance		
	Is this a service to customers/staff/public?	Yes	New
	If yes, is it contracted or commissioned?	Yes	New
	Other - give details		
2	What is the business case for this proposal? Please provide the main purpose of the service, intended outcomes and reasons for change?		
	<p>COVID-19 is a new illness that can affect your lungs and airways. It's caused by a virus called coronavirus and has affected the UK considerably since early 2020. National government policy has steered towards a range of measures including social distancing and recommending for those showing symptoms to isolate up to 14 days and those who are vulnerable/elderly to self-isolate in their homes for up to 12 weeks. As a result of these measures a number of vulnerable and elderly residents in the borough will need help with accessing basic food and medical supplies.</p> <p>The Council is working with a wide range of partner organisations, in an attempt to help minimise the spread of COVID-19. To achieve this, the Council has applied a resilient communities approach, providing civic leadership, to mobilise a public response through our vibrant voluntary and community sector, in recognised locality 'hub' areas. The approach supports shielded or vulnerable residents in self-isolation to stay safely at home and provides essential food to individuals and families in financial hardship, without building long-term dependency on the Council. It also aims to build long lasting connections between local residents, enhancing cohesion and reducing social isolation for vulnerable people.</p>		



3	Who is the proposal likely to affect?		
	People in Walsall	Yes / No	Detail
	All	Yes	Covid-19 can affect all residents, key front line workers and more so who come into contact with infected people such as those in the care sector. Research suggests those that are elderly or with underlying health issues are often more susceptible to the virus and can have more long-term issues and medical complications. Source: https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/ , accessed 28/4/20)
	Specific group/s		
	Council employees		
Other (identify)			
4	Please provide service data relating to this proposal on your customer's protected characteristics.		
<p>Context: Walsall is a metropolitan borough consisting of a mix of urban, suburban and semi-rural communities. The borough covers 40 square miles, is located to the north-west of Birmingham, and is one of the four local authorities that make up the Black Country sub-region (with Dudley, Sandwell and Wolverhampton). Walsall town centre lies at the heart of the borough surrounded by Aldridge, Bloxwich, Brownhills, Darlaston and Willenhall district centres.</p> <p>Population: Walsall has an overall estimated population of 281,300 (ONS, mid-2017). It is predicted to increase by 5.9% over 10 years, from 274,200 in 2014 to 290,200 in 2024. Like many areas, the predicted growth of Walsall's older population (> 65) is higher than this at 12.4%.</p> <p>Ethnicity: Walsall is a culturally diverse town with a 24% non-white British background, where people of Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi background form the largest minority ethnic groups. The number of non-UK born residents in Walsall increased by 3.7% (or 9,900 people) between the 2001 and 2011 censuses and Walsall now has a small Eastern European population who make up about 1% of residents (2,700 people in total). In terms of children and young people aged 0-17, the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups has increased to 37.4% of all pupils living in the area from 36.7% in 2016 and 24% Primary pupils have English as an additional language. (School Census, January 2017).</p> <p>Households: As at April 2019 there are approximately 116,261 households in Walsall which is an increase of 8% or 8439 households since 2011. (Source: Walsall Council). However, between April 2018 and April 2019 there was a small increase in the number of households from 115,501 to 116,215.</p> <p>Housing and Tenure: Census 2011 shows 63% of properties in Walsall are owner-occupier, 24% social rent and 11.7% are private rented. The Walsall Private Sector Stock Condition Survey 2019 has since shown there has been a significant increase in the size of the private rented sector since Census 2011 from 11.7% to 16%, and subsequent decrease in owner occupation from 63% to 59%, and social housing has remained at around 25%. Average House prices in the borough between December 2018 and December 2019 are £166,532 and the mean annual gross pay for October 2019 is £24,014. This means the ratio of income to house prices is unaffordable for many, with average house prices being around 7 times of annual gross pay.</p> <p>Deprivation: The 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) now ranks Walsall as the 22nd most deprived English local authority (out of 326). Since 2015, Walsall has seen an increase in deprivation where it previously ranked 33rd. The 2019 IMD shows 20% of</p>			

Walsall's population living in income deprived households. There are two supplementary indices, which are a sub-set of the Income Deprivation Domain.

The Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI 2019) is one of the sub sets measures the proportion of all children aged 0 to 15 living in income-deprived families and shows 26.1% of children in Walsall are living in income-deprived families.

There are extremes of deprivation, with central and western areas typically much more deprived than eastern areas although pockets of deprivation exist even in the more affluent parts of the borough.

Health and life expectancy: 2011 Census results show that overall health is poorer in Walsall than in England and Wales. One in five residents have a limiting health condition: 10.4% are limited a lot, and a further 10.3% limited a little. 77.3% of residents say their health is good or very good – lower than the 81.2% nationally – with 7.3% experiencing bad or very bad health (5.6% nationally).

Overall life expectancy is gradually increasing for both males and females and the gap with comparator areas has shown positive signs of narrowing. However, the focus continues to be on prolonging a healthy life expectancy and understanding and planning for the implications that will have on service need and provision. Walsall has a lower healthy life expectancy age compared to regional and national comparators. Female healthy life expectancy is lower than males.

Age: The Joint strategic Needs Assessment showed in 2018 that the age of the population is geographically divided: the urban, more deprived areas of the borough are generally younger. The more affluent, least deprived & more rural areas towards the east & south-east are older. This is important to understand the relative demand for services by area.

Walsall has proportionately more young people (under 15) & older people (over 75) population than the England average. In contrast, the working age population is lower than England in most age groups. The net result is a high dependency ratio of 0.64 (dependents : working age), which increases demand for the provision of services. Walsall's population is aging & will see a significant increase in those aged 65 & over - particularly in the 90+ age band. This will be important in determining the future demand on services.

Characteristics of the four hub areas:

Our locality areas have a number of differences in demographics (sourced at Census 2011) and challenges and we have taken these factors into consideration and provided locality based community service which is able to meet the needs of our diverse communities. (Locality Profiles Walsall Council 2020

<https://www.walsallintelligence.org.uk/home/profiles/locality-profiles/>)

The North locality population is 56,500 and has:

- A younger age profile than borough overall
- High proportion of younger children under 10
- Fewer working age and older people
- 14.2% minority ethnic residents which is lower than the borough (Walsall average 24.1%)
- Asian: Pakistani is the largest minority group – 4.1% (Walsall average 5.3%)
- A mix of all other minority groups living in the locality in smaller numbers
- Very high proportion of socially rented properties (37.8%) and below average owner occupation
- Above average proportion of lone parent families and people living alone
- Cancer prevalence within the wards of the North locality is lower than the borough average.

The South locality area has a population of 64000 and with:

- 55.5% minority ethnic residents is well over double the borough average (24.1%)
- Asian groups comprise the largest minority group at 42.2% (Walsall 15.2%)
- All ethnic groups are above Walsall average except White British
- Above average number of people over 65 living alone
- Significant pockets of relative deprivation in areas such as Alumwell, Birchills and Caldmore
- A significant number of unpaid carers in Paddock.

The East locality has a population of 88900 and with:

- 9.0% minority ethnic residents is less than half the borough average (24.1%)
- Asian Indian is the largest minority group at 2.8% (Walsall 6.1%)
- All ethnic groups below Walsall average except White British
- Above average number of people over 65 living alone
- Significantly less deprived than the borough overall
- East locality has high proportions of residents providing unpaid care (12.9% in Pelsall and 11.8% in Brownhills) compared to the borough average (11.4%).

The West locality has a population of 71600 with :

- 19.8% minority ethnic residents is lower than the borough (Walsall average 24.1%)
- Asian: Indian is the largest minority group at 7.4% (Walsall average 5.3%)
- A mix of all other minority groups but in smaller numbers
- Above average proportion of lone parent families (13.9%) than Walsall average (12.0%)
- Slightly more deprived than the borough overall
- Pockets of neighbourhoods to the north less deprived (Coppice Farm North & Coppice Farm South)
- Significant pockets of relative deprivation do exist –New Invention Central; Lodge Farm North; Little London South & King’s Hill.
- The highest proportion of Walsall residents providing unpaid care within the West locality are within the wards of Short Heath, Willenhall North, Bentley & Darlaston North.

5 Please provide details of all engagement and consultation undertaken for this proposal. (Please use a separate box for each engagement/consultation).

Type of engagement/consultation	Internal and external partner dialogue via emails/telephone calls and online meetings	Date	Feb – April 2020
Who attended/participated?	Voluntary and community interest groups, partner agencies, third sector representatives, stakeholders and statutory agencies, internal council services, and elected members.		
Protected characteristics of participants	Representatives from different sector communities were engaged with via emergency and business planning processes.		
Feedback The level of consultation included sharing of key priorities actions and feedback from agencies on the current crisis and resulted in the delivery of a community sector led service.			
6	Concise overview of all evidence, engagement and consultation		
<p>Due to the scale and speed of the Covid-19 emergency, the Council and partners have had to stand up the Community Hub infrastructure in a live environment. As a result, it has been very difficult to do formal consultation. That said, there have been many discussions with customers and key partners during the co-design process and the result is a service that is currently receiving and meeting high levels of demand effectively. However, internal intelligence and data along with communication with the community and voluntary sector we have launched this scheme.</p>			
<p>The Council is working with a range of statutory and voluntary sector partner organisations to help minimise the spread of COVID-19. To achieve this, the Council has applied a resilient communities approach, providing civic leadership to help mobilise a public response via the voluntary, and community sector, in four locality areas.</p>			
<p>The existing ‘Making Connections Walsall initiative’ has been expanded to offer additional support for vulnerable residents and families who need to self-isolate during the Covid-19 emergency. Four Community Hubs are now operating across the following</p>			

areas:

1. **NORTH** - Bloxwich Community Partnership, (Bloxwich East, Bloxwich West, Birchills Leamore, Blakenall);
2. **EAST** - Manor Farm Community Association (Walsall Pelsall, Brownhills, Aldridge North, Rushall-Shelfield and Walsall Wood, Aldridge South, Streetly, Pheasey Park Farm);
3. **SOUTH** - Accord Age Matter's (St Matthews, Paddock, Palfrey, Pleck);
4. **WEST** - Old Hall Peoples Partnership (Bentley and Darlaston North, Darlaston South, Willenhall North, Short Heath, Willenhall South).

On the 21st March 2020, the Government asked the NHS to write to 1.5M people nationally who were considered medically vulnerable. In that letter those vulnerable people, termed "shielded", were informed about the need to self-isolate themselves at home for a period of twelve weeks. Recipients of the letters were also offered the option of registering for a non-means tested free food delivery service to support them to remain in their home. The Council understands that 5045 individuals received an NHS shielded letter in Walsall. It is not yet known how many of these will formerly register with the national food assistance scheme.

7 How may the proposal affect each protected characteristic or group? The effect may be positive, negative, neutral or not known. Give reasons and if action is needed.

Characteristic	Affect	Reason	Action needed Yes / No
Age	Positive	The over 65 population is increasing in the borough (Census 2011). Streetly ranks top of the over 65s category, closely followed by Aldridge, then Pelsall: the distribution of this age group is very much focused in the East. These are the more affluent areas of Walsall. In contrast, the younger population is focused predominantly in areas within the North, South & West: Palfrey, Blakenall & Pleck - typically more deprived wards. As a result Hubs have been provided in 4 different localities by specialist third sector agencies who are able to more fully understand their local communities.	N
Disability	Positive	2011 Census results show that overall health is poorer in	N

			<p>Walsall than in England and Wales. One in five residents have a limiting health condition: 10.4% are limited a lot, and a further 10.3% limited a little. 77.3% of residents say their health is good or very good – lower than the 81.2% nationally – with 7.3% experiencing bad or very bad health (5.6% nationally).</p> <p>The needs of those with a disability have been looked at by ensuring accessible services and ensuring we are able to understand this group and have flexibility to deliver the service with partners if requires.</p>	
	Gender reassignment	neutral	<p>Some information is available nationally however local data is currently unknown. Given the pressures that NHS services are facing in light of COVID-19, the NHS are advising no changes or increases in doses for hormone therapy, until the COVID-19 outbreak is over, as further blood tests cannot be guaranteed at this time. (Source https://gic.nhs.uk/info-support/hormone-therapy-during-the-covid-19-outbreak-patient-information/ Accessed 29/04/20)</p> <p>The service will be delivered irrespective of gender type and will deliver services in a professional manner but do note nationally there is unlikely to be customers from this group with an urgent prescription need.</p>	N
	Marriage and civil partnership	Positive	<p>Census 2011 shows 46.5% of people are married, 11.3% cohabit with a member of the opposite sex, 0.7% live with a partner of the same sex, 24.6% are single and have</p>	N

			<p>never married or been in a registered same sex partnership, 8.2% are separated or divorced. There are 12,727 widowed people living in Walsall.</p> <p>The service will deliver services to this group and understands in some cases the households may have more than 1 person who may be isolating but also will understand the pressures of single person households.</p>	
	Pregnancy and maternity	Positive	<p>In 2018, there were an estimated 839,043 conceptions to women of all ages in England and Wales compared with 847,204 in 2017, a decrease of nearly 1.0%. The conception rate for women under 18 years decreased for the 11th year in a row, the longest continued decrease since records began. (source https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/conceptionandfertilityrates/bulletins/conceptionstatistics/2018 Accessed 29/04/20)</p> <p>Where a service user is pregnant, priority is given to the household as this is one of the high risk groups identified by government account.</p>	N
	Race	Positive	<p>Walsall has a 24% BAME population (Census 2011), and we aim to ensure the service provides flexibility in the food parcel type and service they deliver taking into account cultural issues particularly as many of our BAME resident live in the west of the borough. Origins data as at 2020 shows a large non –White British increases in most of Walsall</p>	N

			Specifically WS5 postal sector (12% increase in non – white British) and a big concentration of Sikh arrivals into Walsall.	
	Religion or belief	Positive	The religious make up of Walsall as per Census 2011 is 59.0% Christian, 19.7% No religion, 8.2% Muslim, 4.3% Sikh, 1.7% Hindu, 0.2% Buddhist. 16,174 people did not state a religion. Based on these figures we are able to ensure we understand the dietary and religious requirements such as those requiring vegetarian/Vegan, Halaal and Kosher products and ensure we are flexible in the type of food parcel we deliver to people.	N
	Sex	Positive	In the 2011 census the population of Walsall was 269,323 and is made up of approximately 51% females and 49% males. The average age of people in Walsall is 39, while the median age is also 39. 89.0% of people living in Walsall were born in England. Regardless of gender we will offer a service to all residents who require help and support. However, where there are cultural issues these will be taken into consideration.	N
	Sexual orientation	Positive	National statistics show the proportion of the UK population aged 16 years and over identifying as heterosexual or straight has decreased from 94.4% in 2012 to 93.2% in 2017. Over the last five years, the proportion of the UK population identifying as lesbian, gay or bisexual	N

			<p>(LGB) has increased from 1.5% in 2012 to 2.0% in 2017, although the latest figure is unchanged from 2016. In 2017, there were an estimated 1.1 million people aged 16 years and over identifying as LGB out of a UK population aged 16 years and over of 52.8 million. Males (2.3%) were more likely to identify as LGB than females (1.8%) in 2017. People aged 16 to 24 years were most likely to identify as LGB in 2017 (4.2%). Source: https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/sexuality/bulletins/sexualidentityuk/2017, accessed 29/04/20)</p> <p>With the figures taken into consideration we will ensure the partners who are at the front line of our service have the right ethos and commitment to serving all of our communities.</p>	
8	Does your proposal link with other proposals to have a cumulative effect on particular equality groups? If yes, give details.		(Delete one) No	
9	Which justifiable action does the evidence, engagement and consultation feedback suggest you take?			
	A	No major change required When no potential for discrimination or adverse impact is identified and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken.		

Action and monitoring plan				
Action Date	Action	Responsibility	Outcome Date	Outcome
2021	Collate Service user data on	LA/delivery partners	Annual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand who has accessed

	protected characteristics and ensure consultation with third sector on the key lessons learnt			<p>service and what needs and demands are of different communities with regards to Covid 19</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure this information is used to ensure communities are represented at future consultation opportunities and intelligence is proactively used to target service delivery.

Update to EqIA	
Date	Detail
Use this section for updates following the commencement of your proposal.	

Contact us

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