

# **Equality information and objectives**

**January 2021**

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If you do not have access to the links in this document or would like this information in another language or format please contact:

Community, Equality and Cohesion  
Resources and Transformation Directorate  
Room 23 Council House  
Lichfield Street  
Walsall  
WS1 1TP

Telephone: 07741 153257  
Email: [brian.fitzgerald@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:brian.fitzgerald@walsall.gov.uk)  
Web: [www.walsall.gov.uk](http://www.walsall.gov.uk)

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## Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Purpose:**

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

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

### **Vision:**

Reduce inequalities and maximise potential.

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

### **Values:**

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

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

#### **Priorities:**

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

## **Equality Information**

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

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

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

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

The Walsall Intelligence website, Walsall Insight, is a resource intended to provide a data-driven overview of the Walsall borough. Throughout this site you will be able to find a range of statistics, info graphics, publications and reports that aim to provide insight into Walsall. <https://www.walsallintelligence.org.uk/>

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

It is Walsall Council's aspiration to employ a workforce that is representative of the communities we serve. The latest annual employment monitoring report provides a statistical overview of Walsall Council's workforce for the period between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020. The latest Employment Monitoring Report is available at [https://go.walsall.gov.uk/equality\\_documents](https://go.walsall.gov.uk/equality_documents)

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

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

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

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

### **Equality Protocol**

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

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

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

#### **Equally Yours**

Equally Yours is a board game that can be used from 2 hours to a whole day. It can be played by all staff from senior management to frontline staff. Questions are customised to Walsall and the council. Learning objectives will vary depending on your audience and business objectives, but could include:

- A deeper understanding and confidence in managing diversity and inclusion;
- Exploring perceptions, thinking and behaviour and the impact on for individuals and the organisation;
- Better knowledge of legislation, policy and guidance and the impact on decision making, systems and conduct;
- Agreeing on actions that are designed for authentic change.

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

#### **Training**

Most courses are now done via [E-Learning](#). However, the Equality Team can also provide bespoke Equality and Diversity training for your service. Please ask for details.

### **Information on Services**

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

#### **Consultation**

Walsall Council endeavours to consult with its residents and business users on major issues or policy changes wherever possible and we use a variety of mechanisms to seek

views. At the centre of our approach are four “Localities”, designed to enable services to be much more responsive to local needs and developed through a place-based approach to engaging partners to work collectively to identify local priorities and deliver positive change in their community.

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

Some consultation may be conducted with specific groups of people who are specially invited to take part; other consultation may be on the basis of self-selection where anyone can respond. On occasions, random sample surveys are conducted in order to ensure the views gathered are from a representative sample of the population, providing statistically robust results. Most consultation is conducted by the Council itself. However, sometimes, consultation is conducted by independent research agencies on the Council's behalf.

View the Council Consultation information at <https://go.walsall.gov.uk/consultations>

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

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

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

This strategy was developed as a result of an extensive cross party consultation exercise, spanning the borough of Walsall. It addresses a wide range of issues, including social attitudes and mixing between different groups of residents as well as representative workforce. Building on this strategy, Walsall Council has become one of the 5 local authorities invited to take part in the Integration Area Programme of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. A Local Integration Partnership led by the Council was set up in October 2018 and our pledged priorities, Walsall for All, were launched in January 2019.

The [Walsall For All](#) programme will build on existing knowledge but will also give Walsall Council an opportunity to learn from local and national projects. As well as focusing on four priorities, below, it will:

- Recognise its strengths as it develops new activities;
- Use its knowledge and experience of community spaces, networks and groups;
- Ensure equal opportunities for all groups and individuals, regardless of their background;
- Support communities and individuals to be engaged, enabled and empowered, as they are the key to achieving our vision;
- Bring partners and people together to advise us and drive our programme forward;

- Learn from others and adapt the programme to ensure it is creating impact.

#### Priority 1 - Connecting Across Communities

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

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

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

#### Priority 3 - Working and Contributing Together

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

#### Priority 4 - Living Together

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

### **Equality Impact Analysis**

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

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

In all EqIAs, details are required to show how it meets the Public Sector Equality Duty requirements:

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

EqIAs must be considered for:

- all reports with financial or policy decisions that go to Council Cabinet;



- budget setting when there may be an unbalanced effect on certain groups of people, and may be contrary to the statutory equality obligations;
- changes to services, procedures, policies and projects when there may be an unbalanced effect on certain groups of people;
- new services, procedures, policies and projects when there may be an unbalanced effect on certain groups of people.

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

## Other sources of equality information

### Walsall Proud Programme

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

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

### Information by Ward

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

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

## Coronavirus and Covid-19

With the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, the corporate communications team developed the **Coronavirus: Latest information and advice** dedicated web page and started publishing residents' Newsletters from April 2020. This vital information flow and newsletters contain advice on where people can find emergency support if they are vulnerable and unable to leave their home. It explains where they can get help with finances, emergency housing and support for families.

In addition, the newsletters provide wellbeing advice around self-isolation and befriending and recruitment of volunteers to help in different roles across the borough. Other local organisations, such as private businesses and local enterprises can also find information about grants. The web pages are linked to the Walsall for All website, which includes Covid-19 advice in community languages and alternative formats.

[https://go.walsall.gov.uk/covid-19\\_information](https://go.walsall.gov.uk/covid-19_information)

## Equality Objectives

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

### **Objective 1**

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

### **Objective 2**

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

### **Objective 3**

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

### **Objective 4**

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

### **Objective 5**

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

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

## Walsall Council Equality and Diversity Information

### Directorate Report December 2020

Directorate	Adult Social Care
Executive Director	Kerrie Allward
Contact officer	Seanna Lassetter
E-mail	Seanna.Lassetter@walsall.gov.uk

### Corporate Equality Objectives

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

We will:-

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

### Equality Act 2010 Protected Characteristics

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

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

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

Title	Purpose	Availability	
		On request	Internet address
Workforce Strategy	<p>To ensure there is an overarching strategy that identifies the workforce across Adult Social Care (ASC) and its needs in relation to workforce development, and learning.</p> <p>Locally the work relating to the strategy is being developed alongside other colleagues and key internal stakeholders, to ensure the workforce is robust in its professional development and that the learning is transferred to end users through the services and front facing delivery from the workforce. There is a clear focus on customers and a key work stream for ASC over the next 12 months is a strengths based practice model of service delivery.</p> <p>The Principal Social Worker is leading on delivering this across the whole of the ASC workforce during the next year and the model will become embedded across all practice, thus ensuring that all we do focuses on individuals and their specific wishes, needs and aspirations, when fulfilling statutory duties.</p> <p>The introduction of a Principal Occupational Therapist working alongside the Principal Social worker is further developing strengths based practice in ASC. This approach maximises independence and</p>		<a href="https://go.walsall.gov.uk/social_care-2">https://go.walsall.gov.uk/social_care-2</a>

	<p>develops technology enabled care support. This supports all cohorts of people proportionally, encouraging independence and person centred outcomes.</p> <p>All of the work being developed across ASC relating to the workforce strategy, is also encompassing of local, regional and national initiatives as well as legislative changes that means that ASC continue to comply and support frontline staff to deliver statutory functions on behalf of the wider Council and the residents of Walsall.</p> <p>Regionally, Walsall are also represented in order to develop a Workforce plan to deliver the needs of the wider workforce when considering the most vulnerable citizens across the region and to ensure their rights, choices and opportunities are promoted, when working to resettle a person back into community life, post hospital admission, or to reduce the risks of secure hospital admission in the first place by supporting a diverse and robust workforce and marketplace.</p>		
Corporate plan	Key strategic plan for Walsall Borough Council		<a href="https://go.walsall.gov.uk/corporate-plan">https://go.walsall.gov.uk/corporate-plan</a>
Directorate Plan	To ensure that the Directorate sign up to and deliver the actions agreed as part of their day to day business, that also feeds from and back into the	✓	

	Corporate Plan. Every Team across ASC works to the Directorate plan on a page and will localise it specifically to their own service areas and individual appraisals (annual performance conversations).		
All HR policies and Procedures	To ensure that any procedures that have to be initiated by ASC, is done so, via the approved procedures and policies of the wider Council	✓	
L&D opportunities that also engage staff as well as encourage raised awareness of equality issues	<p>Examples of the raised awareness training opportunities include:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human Trafficking and Slavery;</li> <li>• Unconscious Bias</li> <li>• Information Governance</li> </ul> <p>This has continued with virtual delivery and e-learning during the Coronavirus pandemic:</p> <p>Specific mandatory training was also commissioned for all practitioners undertaking assessments in ASC from September 2020 “Anti-racism in Social Work practice”.</p>	✓	
Regulated and unregulated Closure Guidance	To help Teams to plan and collaborate working process and actions in prepare for the closure of a regulated or an unregulated home or service across Social care	✓	
Direct Payments Policy and Guidance	Ensures that every customer who could be offered a Direct payment in lieu of services is actually supported to receive them		<a href="https://go.walsall.gov.uk/direct-payments">https://go.walsall.gov.uk/direct-payments</a>

All Directorate Procedures and policies	Currently undergoing a refresh- led by Head of Service /Group Manager as part of an ongoing work plan and once completed will be uploaded onto a central repository	✓	
Better Care Fund	The Better Care Fund is a national programme that aims to improve ways local health and social care services work together. The fund has been in place since 2014 following an announcement from Central Government in 2013 outlining and providing funding to support social care to keep people out of hospital and support a timely discharge from hospital, moving the pressure away from NHS services.		<a href="https://go.walsall.gov.uk/health_and_social_care/adult_social_care/better_care_fund">https://go.walsall.gov.uk/health_and_social_care/adult_social_care/better_care_fund</a>

## Part 2 Equality Impact Assessments November 2019 to October 2020

Service	Title	Contact officer name
Adult Social Care Commissioning	Residential and Nursing Care Services for Older People and Complex Care	Tracy Simcox
Adult Social Care Commissioning	Adult Social Care Commissioning Residential and Nursing Block Contract	Jean Watson
Service wide	Direct Payments	Ian Staples/Jennie Pugh
Adult Services	Emergency Duty Team move to the Depot	Paul Sharpe



## Part 3 Equality and Diversity Objectives

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

Since the start of 2020 we have worked during unprecedented times due to COVID. Adult Social Care (ASC) has continued to deliver its responsibilities in a way that has focussed on ensuring the most vulnerable continue to receive the safest and most proportionate support.

During this time we have had to also ensure the workforce and partners remain safe and able to deliver collaboratively, the outcomes that would ensure fairness, transparency and an ongoing commitment to deliver business continuity with flexible arrangements for providers and the introduction of and additional expenses process.

We have continued to encourage at all times, the opportunities for local people to access local community resource, this has been difficult during lockdown and the tiered approaches towards COVID. However, where usual activities have not been available for people, ASC has continued to work with partners and the customers directly, to ensure as much safe support and continuity could be maintained as possible during these times. This has involved the undertaking of individual risk assessments, the review of business continuity plans and providing risk assessments for providers.

People have received far more contact and communication via telephone and emails in the past 10 months than they would ordinarily. This has been through choice on the customers' part and necessary due to the wider communication needs and reduced capacity due to COVID and regularly updated guidance from NHS England and Public Health England.

Community hubs created as a result of COVID and the coronavirus pandemic are a meaningful and local resource that communities and individuals have been able to connect to and utilise. Provider forums have operated virtually at a minimum of weekly to support communication.

ASC have worked together with the community hubs and other partners in order to diversify service delivery, ensure the cohort of people who are known to ASC remain supported as we collectively work through the pressures of COVID and the coronavirus pandemic.

ASC supports the work of Social Prescribers. These roles work with adults who have received assessment and packages of care, who then, through the social prescribing routes, can also maximise their independence by encouraging the take up of services within the community.

The importance of the work of Social Prescribers can also be demonstrated in the links to GPs surgeries and therefore help to maximise improved health and wellbeing.

Due to COVID and the coronavirus pandemic and the increased demands during winter pressures, there has been a will to increase the use of social prescriber again. This has offered and given people more choice, (albeit a reduced choice and restrictions at the current time due to COVID), rather than always having to come into ASC for services.

An example of this is the expansion of a network of telephone befriending services that social prescribers can connect people to. Those who are hearing impaired have been supported to access WhatsApp support groups. Social isolation continues to be a significant challenge throughout the pandemic, but it is a challenge that ASC has endeavoured to meet.

Frontline practitioners have fully embraced new ways of working using MS Teams and WhatsApp to support virtual assessments and given advice on manual handling concerns through windows and links to YouTube videos.

All face-to-face visits have been risk assessed to be absolutely necessary with a good supply of personal protection equipment (PPE) provided enabling us to continue to prioritise the most vulnerable and uphold human rights. ASC has supported people to remain at home, avoid admission to hospital and have their needs met in residential and nursing settings when required, all critical interventions during the pandemic.

People with a range of disabilities from the age of 14 also access time limited support, as well as a whole range of interventions that can help to promote independence, via the internal provider resource. An example of this is supporting an individual to learn how to travel independently opening up so many more opportunities.

The intention is to also link the technology enabled care support initiative and the support of the occupational therapy tasks to this model in order to further maximise the opportunities available to all people who come to ASC for signposting, assessment and support.

There is an intention to capture customer journeys as part of the work being carried out to introduce and embed the strength based approach. This will also help to continue to improve the customer experience as well as showcase with customers themselves how the approach is helping them to lead meaningful and fulfilled lives as a Walsall citizen.

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

Adult Social Care (ASC) works closely with local communities as part of their work around localities and place-based models of care and support. Walsall Together is technically the umbrella partnership of which ASC sits as part of and as such the focus is around bringing together Health and Social Care and Public Health in order to support the wider needs of the communities.

ASC has representatives on the Equality and Cohesion group and also represents itself as visible partners when working with One Walsall. As a result, it will often be helping communities and local people to understand what is available to them locally and to signpost as part of our prevention duties under the Care Act. In addition, it will also enable them to become far more self-sustaining and in control of their lives, as well as offering Information advice and guidance, thus maximising a person's ability to remain unique and valued as a member of the local community they live.

There is also an intention during 2021 for ASC and Public Health to deliver an Equalities Plan as part of their ongoing work. There is also a recognition from the members of the Corporate Equalities Board that the work delivered as part of equalities needs to reshape and be invigorated. Members of the directorate Team will continue to be visible on that group and strengthen the corporate objectives as well as help to deliver the local activities as part of the directorates plan.

Healthwatch is commissioned by ASC. We will continue to monitor the success based on evaluation of customer experiences and feedback /surveys from customers. They are an independent service that can put people in touch with sources of information on NHS and social care services in Walsall. They can give information about what to do when things go wrong and when people don't understand how to make a complaint.

The aim of Healthwatch Walsall is to give citizens and communities a stronger voice to influence and challenge how health and social care services are provided within their locality. Local Healthwatch provides, or signposts, people to information to help them make choices about health and care services. In their most recent quarterly report they evidenced supporting a Walsall resident to receive a re-assessment of their social care needs which has given positive adjustments to meet their needs.

The promotion of employment opportunities for people, regardless of their complexity of need, means that as a partner ASC is working to encourage people to prepare for employment as part of IMPACT and European Social Funding routes to enable that to happen. In the past year, ASC have improved its overall performance to support people with a learning disability to achieve paid employment and has exceeded its target for the first time in 7 years. This has been achieved by supporting people to receive paid work experience prior to entering into permanent employment and to help them seek real working environments to test skills and receive on the job feedback whilst receiving payment for this.

ASC will continue to work to deliver all the activities asked of them as part of its Council wide transformation programme (PROUD) but also ensure this is inclusive of equalities for the citizens we serve.

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

The ASC Directorate works to address these issues as follows:

#### A representative workforce

**(Walsall Council and ASC statistics based on Employment Monitoring Report 2019 – 2020 compared to previous annual reporting as at March each year)**

The demographics of the population in Walsall are as follows;

	<b>Census 2011 Walsall Working Age Residents (age 16-74)</b>	<b>Walsall Council (March 2020)</b>	<b>ASC (March 2020)</b>
<b>Male/Female split</b>	49.1% Male 50.9% Female	32.26% Male 67.74% Female	17.09% Male 82.91% Female
<b>Minority Ethnic</b>	23%	22.41%	30.81%
<b>Disabilities</b>	10.4% (different definition)	4.88%	7.84%

The number of people working for Walsall Council has reduced year on year since 2011/12, resulting in a total workforce of 3097 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020. The headcount for ASC on which the March 2020 profile data is based has reduced only marginally from March 2019, i.e. from 362 to 357. Detailed below are some points for consideration regarding the profile of the workforce:

#### Gender

The % of female workers in ASC at 82.91% is a negligible change on last year (82.6%) and remains consistently high. Consequently, male workers are underrepresented (17.09%).

#### Gender Pay

The split of female workers to male workers in each grade band in ASC remains relatively stable in comparison to the same period 12 months ago. This has fluctuated as follows;

#### % of female workers by Grade

- Grade G5 and below – 82.14% a slight increase from 81.03% at March 2019
- Grade G6-G9 – 85.28%, a slight increase from 84.3% at March 2019
- Grade 10-13 – 77.78% a decrease from 81.25% at March 2019
- G14 and above – 90% an increase from 80% at March 2019. In a small cohort of 10 at this level, this represents switch of only 1 additional female and reduction of 1 male employee

Overall, there has been a slight shift of female employees into grades 9 and below, particularly in terms of headcount.

#### BAME

In ASC the % of minority ethnic workers has increased slightly at 30.81% compared to 30.11% at March 2019. This compares favourably with the Walsall community in which 23% declare as BAME.

### **Pay**

The % of BAME workers in each grade band is as follows;

#### **% of BAME workers by Grade**

- Grade G5 and below – 18.75% a slight increase from 18.1% at March 2019
- Grade G6-G9 – 37.42%, a slight increase from 36.05% at March 2019
- Grade 10-13 – 37.5% a decrease from 39.06% at March 2019
- G14 and above – 10% which is no change from March 2019.

Overall BAME employees are well represented in the Directorate and positively reflected in the grading structure, occupying high % in all grades up to G13.

### **Disability**

The % of workers within ASC who have a disability is 7.84%, the highest % in any Directorate and above the Council aggregate.

The % split of workers with a disability in different pay bands in comparison to last year is as follows:

#### **% of employees declaring a disability by Grade**

- Grade G5 and below – No actual change in headcount (6) from March 2019.
- Grade G6-G9 – 9.82%, a decrease of 11.05% March 2019. This represents a headcount change of 3
- Grade 10-13 – 8.33%, an increase on 6.25% at March 2019. This represents a headcount change of 2
- G14 and above – 0.00%, no change from last year.

The base numbers in this group are small so the headcount is more revealing than the % in terms of demonstrating positive movement in this area.

### **Age**

The 2011 census shows that 16-24 year olds make up the largest group in the local population at 11.7%. However, it would not be expected that the Directorate workforce, with a requirement to be largely professionally qualified and experienced should reflect this. In ASC the % of the workforce under 25 years of age is 0.84%, lower than other Directorates and the Council aggregate. The largest age group in ASC workforce are the 55-59 age group (18.77%) and overall 36.98% of the Directorate workforce are over 50. This is not unusual in an ageing population and long-serving, professionally qualified workforce, but it is higher than the Council aggregate and second highest of the 4 Directorates.

### **Religion and Sexual Orientation**

There continues to be some reluctance from employees to disclose their religion and sexual orientation. Just over 50% 'prefer not say' or have not declared their religion or belief ('No religion' is a declaration option).

43.42% of ASC employees have not disclosed their sexual orientation, 56.02% have declared their sexual orientation as heterosexual and 0.56% as gay or lesbian.

## **Summary of Progress since 2016/2017**

### **ADULT SOCIAL CARE – OUTLINE EQUALITY PLAN**

In 2016-17 the Directorate reviewed its annual employment monitoring data. This indicated that there were particular areas of the staffing profile that did not reflect favourably in terms of the local population we serve. Since then we have undertaken a number of steps and reviewed the 2019-20 monitoring data to check on our progress and continuing issues.

**Our main reference point for comparison is the last census data from 2011 summarised as follows:**

	<b>Census 2011 Walsall Working Age Residents (age 16-74)</b>
<b>Gender</b>	49% Male, 51% Female
<b>BAME</b>	23%
<b>Age</b>	16-24 years = 11.7% the largest single group

**Disability:** change in definition doesn't allow comparison

**Sexual Orientation:** not measured in census

### **REVIEW, ACTIONS, RESULTS, PLANS**

**REVIEW:** The 2016/17 monitoring data identified some clear features in the Directorate's employee diversity profile that required action:

- **Males** under-represented/not applying, 26% applied, 14% appointed and they made up only 16.92% of the Directorate workforce
- **16 to 24 age group** under-represented/not applying, representing only 1.14% of the Directorate workforce
- **BAME employees** under-represented in grades 10 to 13 at 16% of the workforce in this grade band
- 66% non-disclosure of **sexual orientation**

### **ACTIONS:**

The Directorate took a number of steps to address some of these issues:

- Participation in graduate programme to increase intake of 16 to 24;
- Participation in apprenticeship programme to increase intake of 16 to 24;
- Mentoring of male BAME employee;
- Mandatory equality and unconscious bias training;
- Representative recruitment panels where possible and appropriate;
- Targeting positive action in grades 10 to 13 for succession planning;
- Mandatory anti-racist social work practice training for all practitioners; undertaking assessments to raise awareness of the impact of racism;

### **RESULTS:**

The 2019/20 Employment Monitoring data shows:

- Negligible change in male representation from 16.92% to 17.09%
- 16 to 24 age group have reduced, now representing only 0.84% of the Directorate workforce, although it was always a small cohort

- Significant improvement in BAME representation to 37.5% of employees in grades 10 to 13
- Reduction in 13+ grades being representative of BAME employees, but it is a small cohort – only 3 posts filled in past 3 years
- The high level of non-disclosure of sexual orientation has shown improvement from 66% non-disclosure to 43% non-disclosure. However, representation of gay, lesbian and bisexual staff in the overall workforce has not increased.

### Summary

	2016-17 Issues	2016-17 Indicator	2019-20 Indicator
<b>Gender</b>	Under-representation of males	16.92% of workforce	17.86% of workforce
<b>Age Profile</b>	Under-representation of 16-24 age group	1.14% of workforce	0.84% of workforce
<b>BAME workforce</b>	Under-representation in grades 10 - 13	16% of this grade band	37.5% of this grade band
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	Non-declaration	61% non-declared	43% non-declared

### PLANS:

We have shown some improvement, but need to continue to set targets, make and sustain progress linked to our plans and in the long term maintain a workforce profile that reflects our communities. Corporate forums, mechanisms and actions will be an important part of this but the Directorate will seek to achieve meaningful and sustained improvement through the direct engagement and involvement of our staff to ensure that we understand what helps us to develop and sustain a culture of positivity and diversity.

The Directorate will now develop a new action plan which is likely to include:

- A 'disclosure initiative' to explore and improve the willingness of employees to disclose protected characteristics and sexual orientation in particular
- Promote participation in the Corporate Equality Group
- Set up working groups to maintain momentum on diversity and inclusion plans and initiatives
- Open dialogue with workforce to promote diversity and inclusion and to involve them directly in our plans
- Embedding the learning practitioners undertaking assessments have accessed to ensure ongoing awareness and use of strategies to challenge racism in the workplace and ensure they are anti-racist in their practice, monitored through casefile audits.

Work with colleges/schools/universities to promote our employer brand and target our intake to younger age groups.

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

Through the statutory assessment process, ASC spends a great deal of their time meeting with and speaking to local citizens, albeit there has had to be some variation of how this is delivered in recent months due to Covid-19. It is recognised that vulnerable people require a more bespoke way of being supported, from the first point of contact. Timely and proportionate support is sought from agencies and partners in order to maximise a person's potential to succeed.

The development of community hubs has happened at pace to locally meet the needs of thousands of residents. This has continued, grown and developed during Covid-19 as all partners have worked far more collaboratively and thought outside the box in recent months due to the situations we have all faced during Covid.

ASC practitioners have adapted to new ways of working, predominantly working from home when possible and only undertaking face to face visits when this is deemed absolutely necessary. Robust risk assessments are in place to ensure that all the current public health guidance is adhered and recognises the dynamic nature of this locally. There are numerous examples of good practice using virtual meetings which have been preferable for some. Assessments, reviews and support have been conducted virtually. In many situations this has been less intrusive for the individual or family concerned and less anxious for those who may be autistic.

Technology enables us to work more inclusively and collaboratively, particularly when family members who want to contribute may live some distance away or numerous professionals are involved. The option of virtual meetings will be considered going forward when it is no longer required due to public health concerns. Our Health and Social Care Alliance model of care and support under the umbrella of Walsall Together (hosted by Walsall Heath Care Trust) is our partnership to deliver the priorities of Walsall. Shared ownership of key agendas and work across the key stakeholder group for employment, is proving effective when planning the locality based models of working.

ASC engages and actively works with colleagues across all partners to address and help to improve the SEND agendas, particularly when supporting the needs around young people preparing for Adulthood, or where there may be new ways of commissioning outcomes for young people who are known to both children and adult Teams and resources more widely.

Engagement with a new Preparing for Adulthood policy has been achieved in the past 10 months. The next stage is to encourage far more engagement from young people in order to really listen and understand the aspirations and comments from that group of people. This is challenge due to current Covid-19 restrictions and virtual meetings are being considered. A video was developed and draft published earlier in the year. This was done as part of preparing the internal provider and a third sector provider for promoting a new way of working with all ages and related to a strength based set of principles. Due to Covid-19, this work is taking longer to achieve. However, the lessons learned from the Covid-19 pandemic will also add more evidence and support the work moving forward that genuinely focusses on inclusion and real life for people with a range of disabilities.



Commissioners continue to actively engage with the external marketplace by way of strengthening local relationships and harnessing and sharing good practice. During the time of Covid-19 Commissioners have worked with providers in order to support them during times they have not been able to physically support vulnerable people. They have helped to maintain the marketplace during Covid-19 and have also worked to support providers to help maintain contact with family members by sourcing 57 iPads through a donation from a third party. All these iPads were delivered to the residential and nursing home across Walsall in order for families to maintain contact through social media with their loved ones in the homes.

An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken last year on both Residential and Nursing Care Services for Older People and Complex Care and Residential and Nursing Care Services for Older People and Complex Care and these provided positive impact.

Walsall Council has supplied free PPE to all vulnerable groups during Covid-19 and all of this has been co-ordinated and delivered via the internal resource within the ASC provider services, distributing just under 4M items of PPE since March, 2020. We have administered Infection Control Grant rounds 1 and 2 to all eligible CQC registered providers irrespective of whether they have a contract with Walsall Council. ASC and Public Health have worked together to ensure that the swabbing and safe use of PPE has been maintained for all during the past few months and anyone who has required support has been supported.

Our learning and development offer as mentioned above has responded to internal casefile audit findings and the raising of awareness on inequality globally, specific mandatory training was commissioned for all practitioners undertaking assessments in ASC from September 2020 "Anti-racism in Social Work practice"- this one day course revisits ideas of race, racism, privilege and intersectionality.

The underlying premise of the course is that social work is a call to resistance insofar as the dominant forces in society push towards disadvantage in virtually every walk of life for black and brown people. Social work services represent a response to these inequalities and as such must include an element of push back as an alternative to being an enabler through passivity. Evaluations of the course included the following comments:-

"I found the training extremely thought provoking, mind opening and challenging. It felt like the start of what should be ongoing discussions and conversations in order to bring about meaningful change."

"The training was really good, it explored some different perspectives, the idea of prejudice and contextual influences, along with being reflective about practice."

Protests across the UK in response to shocking death of George Floyd in Minneapolis showed how important it is that we are talking about racism which was encouraged in ASC Teams. This conversation needs to continue to be encouraged and we need to recognise that we have a diverse workforce, and we serve people and communities many of whom are from Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority groups. Black Lives Matter is about what is morally right in promoting fairness and equality, and challenging racism – for our staff and the adults with care and support needs we work with. We

are committed to giving our practitioners the awareness and tools to practice in an anti-racist way.

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

A recent opportunity for more care providers to join the supported living framework for care and support actually opens up more opportunities for people to receive a good service. It means there will be more providers choosing to work with Walsall Council and the contractual arrangements as part of that and therefore it also means there is more likelihood of a stronger marketplace going forward.

Organisations will be expected to use innovative approaches to gather and capture views and experiences of health and social care services and how they are promoting accessible use by seldom heard of communities i.e. individuals with learning disabilities, limited or fluctuating mental capacity, ethnic minority groups. Organisations are requested to provide examples of past experience, outcomes and impact of how successful they have been previously in gathering and engaging with seldom heard groups. The same applies to the introduction of any new contract for IT/Digital, as without and ability to flex and adapt, the needs of harder to reach groups of people and individuals will not be met.

Third sector groups can and do support people very well, particularly when there is also a risk of social isolation. ASC have seen this more so in the past few months when supporting communities during COVID. A community organisation has expanded its network considerably, providing a robust and comprehensive response to those in the shielded group during the pandemic. Originally working exclusively with older adults they now work with all age groups connecting people to practical support including food parcels and medication. They have also build networks of support with volunteers having a list of people they phone each week to check on their wellbeing and this helps people feel more connected and encourages people to seek help when they need it.

The ASC and Children's directorates have continued to work on shared agendas to encourage closer working relationships. Again, a great deal has been achieved across wider Walsall and its partners due to COVID in the past few months and lessons learned from that and the innovations during unprecedented times may also aid the work around how to support the harder to reach groups going forward.

The times have also given positive evidence of how resilient communities and how people have been and how they have at times been able to lead and be responsible for how they want things and outcomes to be delivered, even during a crisis. This bodes well for the future so long as we do not lose momentum where there has been success.

COVID has hi-lighted the disproportionate impact on disadvantaged and excluded groups. A number of reports and guidance documents have emerged as a consequence which have been carefully considered by ASC informing the individual ongoing risk assessments undertaken in relation to all ASC staff. A number of government publications have informed this including:-

- Covid 19 – Understanding the impact on BAME communities - 16<sup>th</sup> June 2020

A summary of stakeholder insights into factors affecting the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) on black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities.

- Coronavirus – Covid 19 – Reducing Risk in Adult Social Care – 19<sup>th</sup> June 2020

A framework for how adult social care employers should assess and reduce risk to their workforce during the coronavirus pandemic.

The British Association of Social Workers has also provided a Covid 19 risk assessment guide and flowchart that has informed our approach. The wellbeing of staff and the most vulnerable citizens in Walsall has remained our priority throughout the current global pandemic, particularly those who are disadvantaged or excluded.

## Walsall Council Equality and Diversity Information

### Directorate Report

### December 2019

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

#### Corporate Equality Objectives

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

#### Corporate Equality Objectives

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

We will:-

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

#### Equality Act 2010 Protected Characteristics

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

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

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

Title	Purpose	Availability	
		On request	Internet address
The Corporate Strategy	Key strategic plan for Walsall Borough Council		<a href="https://go.walsall.gov.uk/corporate-plan">https://go.walsall.gov.uk/corporate-plan</a>
The Walsall Plan: Our Health and Wellbeing Strategy	Key Strategic plan for health priorities		<a href="https://go.walsall.gov.uk/Portals/0/Uploads/PublicHealth/66800%20The%20Walsall%20Plan-%20Our%20Health%20and%20Wellbeing%20Strategy%202019-2021.pdf?ver=2020-01-23-160833-263">https://go.walsall.gov.uk/Portals/0/Uploads/PublicHealth/66800%20The%20Walsall%20Plan-%20Our%20Health%20and%20Wellbeing%20Strategy%202019-2021.pdf?ver=2020-01-23-160833-263</a>
Complaints (corporate and statutory)	Information regarding the complaints process is available electronically and in hard copy and different formats for children and young people. The Team offer support to all complainants, including adapting the format of information to meet requirements and drafting complaints on behalf of the customer		<a href="https://go.walsall.gov.uk/tellus">https://go.walsall.gov.uk/tellus</a>
Workforce Strategy	Our ambition to ensure that Walsall children are safe and that we are intervening with the child, in the right place, at the right time for the right length of time, means taking every opportunity to invest in and grow colleagues and partners so that we can work better together to make sure children and young people living, learning and growing up in Walsall are safe, happy, healthy and with a bright future. To contribute towards this vision, children's services recognises the importance	✓	

	of having a skilled workforce who work together to deliver better outcomes. Workforce development is the key to ensuring we continue to understand and meet our employees learning and development needs.		
Walsall Right for Children Inclusion Strategy	The Strategy sets out the vision and priorities to ensure a step change in improved educational outcomes for all children	✓	
Walsall SEN Strategy 2020-2025	This strategy, implemented in line with the significant Government reforms to education, health and social care for children and young people with SEND and their parents and carers. The principles of these reforms were to facilitate better outcomes for children and young people by combining the support provided across health, education and social care from birth to 25, ensuring early intervention, and to make sure children, young people and parents are at the centre of the decision making.	✓	
Walsall Accessibility Strategy 2020-2023	This strategy sets out the vision that Walsall Council have to increase access to education for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities, so that they can benefit from educational provision to the same extent that children without special educational needs and/or disabilities can.	✓	
School Causing Concern Protocol	This protocol outlines the procedures for school settings in relation to monitoring, challenge, support and intervention	✓	
Walsall SEND Written Statement of Action	Our action plan, co-produced with parents, which lays out, our direction of travel to deliver improved outcomes for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)	✓	

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

	statutory framework particularly the requirements within the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.		
Children's Services Right 4 Children Newsletter (WR4C)	Regular newsletter to Children's Services workforce highlighting local, regional and national resources to protect and support vulnerable children and their families. Celebrates local developments, good news and successes	✓	
Education Update Newsletter	Newsletter to all schools highlighting local, regional and national developments and resources to improve progress and attainment including resources to engage and protect vulnerable children. Celebrates local good news and successes.	✓	



## Part 2 Equality Impact Assessments November 2019 to October 2020

Service	Title	Contact officer name
Directorate Wide	New Safeguarding Partnership Arrangements	Carol Boughton
	Proposed Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools for 2021/22 and the Proposed Scheme for Coordinated Admissions for Primary and Secondary Schools for 2021/22	Kate Mann
Children's Social Care	Council Tax Relief for Care Leavers	Jivan Semba
Early Help	Future of Stanley's Nursery	Julie Jones
SEND	EHC Process Survey	Jenny Thompson

## Part 3 Equality and Diversity Objectives

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

Our work this year has been shaped by two global events: the Covid 19 pandemic and the death of George Floyd. These events have resulted in a re-focusing on how we address structural inequalities in Children's Services and how we deliver Services to children and their families and support those individual workers and schools to make a difference in promoting inclusion and understanding impact from the individual's point of view.

It also required us to think differently about how we would deliver our key services as the national lockdown impacted on every area of our work. For colleagues in Access and Inclusion, this meant thinking about how to support schools which were closed but still required to ensure that their vulnerable pupils were safe. This led to the development of the daily updates which are shared with over 500 school leaders, Designated Safeguarding Leads and Local Authority staff. These included a range of statutory instruments, guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) and Public Health England and well as local Public Health information and advice.

For social workers undertaking child protection enquiries and providing wrap around support to vulnerable families, this meant thinking about which children absolutely still needed to be seen face to face and how to establish and maintain meaningful contact with others; how best to undertake parenting assessments. Our Safeguarding and Review Service has needed to consider how to undertake child protection case conferences and our Early Help Service needed to rethink the summer scheme and delivery of parenting programmes. Our Principal Social Worker created a series of guides to support safe practice which were widely circulated.

As part of our work to understand individual experience we have established a number of different working groups:

- a task group to look at the experience of children from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds in care with a focus on those living with carers from a different culture, ethnicity and/or language;
- a group which will consider the experiences of children and families who are involved in the child protection system. This group will link with Walsall Youth Justice Service;
- Walsall Youth Justice Service (YJS) has been successful in obtaining funding from the office of the police and crime commissioner to facilitate a project to address disproportionality in the youth justice system in Walsall. YJS has commissioned an organisation to engage and consult with our young people and families, to support YJS practitioners with our engagement of Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) young people and to establish an infrastructure for the service to monitor and challenge issues pertaining to discrimination and disproportionality. The initial stages of the project will be completed by March 2021.



*Art work by children in one of our residential homes produced during lockdown 2020*

Throughout the lockdown period, Children's Social Care has been required to report to the DfE on a fortnightly basis regarding the contacts we have had with the children we know:

	Children that are looked after	Children on a child protection plan	All other children in need
How many children do you have in the following groups?	680	185	1237
How many of the children in each group have been seen or contacted by their social worker in the last 4 weeks?	632 (92.9%)  Nat – 69.1% Reg – 59.5% SN – 62.6%	184 (99.5%)  Nat – 69.1% Reg – 93.2% SN – 94.2%	1132 (91.5%)  Nat – 62.9% Reg – 58.7% SN – 58.8%

Our performance over this period has been consistently high and above that of regional and statutory neighbours.

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

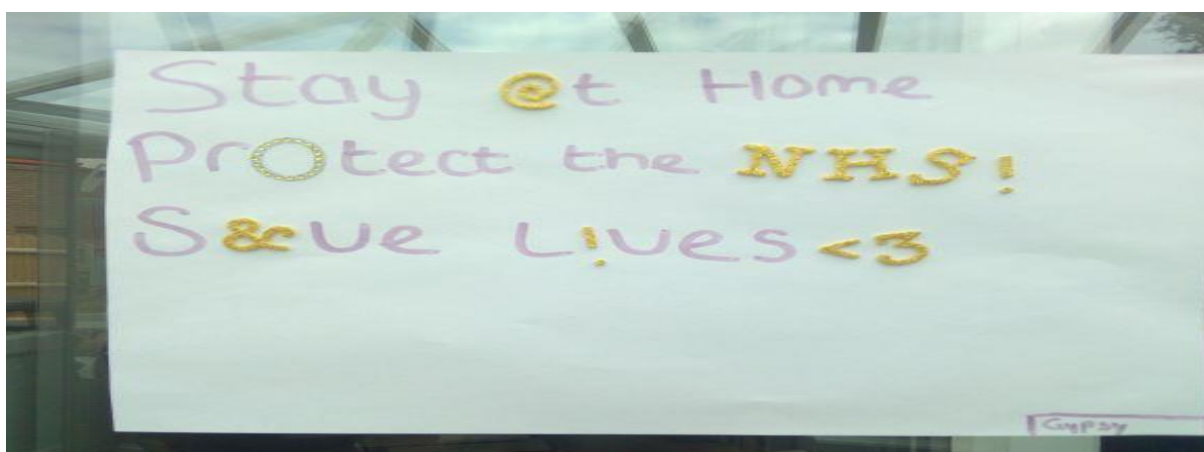
Colleagues in Access and Inclusion have worked in partnership with schools across Walsall during this year to tackle both the impact of the Pandemic and its disproportionate effect on BAME communities. This resulted in the establishment of a working group which brought together governance, safeguarding, HR and Public Health Teams as well as Head teachers of schools that had high proportions of staff and pupils from these communities and Walsall for All. Collectively the group pulled together national data and guidance on the impact of

Covid-19 and developed an action plan utilising schools comms and Council social media to inform and provide assurances regarding staff and pupils from BAME returning to school.

An individual risk assessment was developed for school leaders and a checklist to support discussions with staff from BAME communities returning to education settings to mitigate their higher risk. The daily update also provided a platform to raise issues relating to structural inequalities as momentum grew following the death of George Floyd and the part schools could play in addressing these. This included information and resources regarding for schools to teach black history. At the start of the pandemic, along with other local authorities, Walsall was provided with additional staff resource in the form of an HMI (Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools) who was also the National Lead for English and Modern Foreign languages. At our Head Teacher's briefing in July he provided an overview of Ofsted's position in inspecting the curriculum and specifically in light of "Black Lives Matters", black history and the Modern Foreign Languages curriculum. During his presentation he gave a range of examples of how Black Lives Matters could be explored through the curriculum including a number of examples within Walsall. The slides from his presentation remain accessible to schools as a resource.

Based on analysis undertaken by Public Health Walsall, the exclusions guidance and processes have been updated to support greater challenge at school level in regard to exclusions including information and challenge regarding the Pupils from BAME communities and those with Special Educational Needs that are disproportionately affected by exclusions.

During this year we have worked with parents of children with a special educational need and three different parent support groups to co-produce a tender to provide an independent Advice and Support Service for parents whose children have special educational needs. These parents were then invited to participate in evaluating and scoring the resulting tenders which contributed towards the final award of the contract. To support them in this activity, procurement and commissioning officers provided support before, during and after the task.



*Art work from children in one of our residential homes produced during lockdown 2020.*

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

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

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

In addition, our social workers are required to be registered with the Social Work England, our regulatory body and to adhere to the Professional Standards Guidance (2020). Our Educational Psychologists are required to register with the Health and Care Professions Council and adhere to the professional standards.

#### A representative workforce

The demographics of the population in Walsall are as follows;

	<b>Census 2011 Walsall Working Age Residents (age 16-74)</b>	<b>Walsall Council</b>	<b>Children Services</b>
<b>Male/Female split</b>	49.1% Male 50.9% Female	32.26% ↑ Male 67.74% ↓ Female	14.83% ↑ Male 85.17% ↑ Female
<b>Minority Ethnic</b>	23%	22.41% ↑	27.99% ↑
<b>Disabilities</b>	10.4% (different definition)	4.88% ↑	4.84% ↑

The number of people working for Walsall Council has reduced year on year since 2011/12, resulting in a total workforce of 3097 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020. Children Services headcount has shown no change from 690 last year to 691 this year. Detailed below are some points for consideration regarding the profile of the workforce:

#### Gender

The % of female workers in Children's Services at 85.17% is a negligible change on last year (85.36%) and remains consistently higher than other Directorates and the Council overall. As a result, male workers are underrepresented (14.83%), which is a negligible change on last year. In Children Services the % split of all males classed as part time workers (1.66%) and female workers (19.36) shows a reduction in part-time working for both genders year on year and the proportion of male part-time workers is the lowest compare to other Directorates.

#### Gender Pay

The % split of female workers to male workers in each grade band in Children's Services remains relatively stable in all but the top tier in comparison to the same period 12 months ago. This has fluctuated as follows;

### **% of female workers by Grade**

- Grade G5 and below – 89.71% a slight decrease from 90.07% last year;
- Grade G6-G9 – 84.74%, a slight increase from 83.79% last year;
- Grade 10-13 – 82.11% a slight decrease from 83.46% last year;
- G14 and above – 81.82% a potentially significant decrease from 95.24% last year. In a small cohort at this level this represents switch of 4 headcount in the male/female balance.

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

### **Minority Ethnic**

In Children services the % of minority ethnic workers has increased slightly at 27.99% compared to 26.96% last year. This compares favourably with the Walsall community in which 23% declare as minority ethnic. At March 2020, 9.08% of workers in Children's Services have not stated or chosen not to state their ethnic group.

### **Disability**

The % of workers within Children Services who have a disability is 4.84% an increase of 0.95% on last year (3.19%). It should be noted that 14.07% of staff have chosen not to state whether they have a disability or not which is a marginal decrease from last year.

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

### **% of employees declaring a disability by Grade**

- Grade G5 and below – 8.82%, an increase from last year (7.80%) and on the previous year (5.37%), represents an increase of 1 headcount;
- Grade G6-G9 – 3.95%, an increase on 2.49% last year, represents an increase of 5 headcount;
- Grade 10-13 – 4.07, an increase on 0.79% last year, represents an increase of 4 headcount;
- G14 and above – 0.00%, no change from last year.

Apart from G14 and above, all grade bands have shown an increase in workers declaring a disability. The base numbers are small so the actual numbers are more revealing than the % in terms of demonstrating positive movement in this area.

### **Age**

The 2011 census shows that 16-24 year olds make up the largest group in the local population at 11.7%. However, it would not be expected that the Directorate workforce, with a requirement to be largely professionally qualified and experienced should reflect this. In Children's Services the % of the workforce under 25 years of age is 4.84%, higher than the Council overall, 2<sup>nd</sup> highest compared to the other three Directorates and stable compared to last year. The largest age group in Children's Services workforce are 35 – 39 year olds, whereas all other Directorates have their largest cohort in the 50-54 age group. Children's Services has a relatively young age profile compared to other Directorates with around 42% of staff being under 40.

## **Religion and Sexual Orientation**

There continues to be some reluctance from employees to disclose their religion and sexual orientation. Just over 50% 'prefer not say' or have not declared their religion or belief.

46.44% of Children's Services employees have not disclosed their sexual orientation, 52.04% have declared their sexual orientation as heterosexual and 1.51% as gay or lesbian.

## **Summary of Progress since 2019/2020**

Our newly qualified social worker programme continues to be a regional leader and assists in attracting first time graduates to Walsall and we have recently had success in attracting a number of more experienced workers to join us.

Employees still remain reluctant to declare religion/beliefs, sexual orientation and to some degree disability and minority groups. We continue to encourage all employees to share this information by providing assurance that this sensitive information will never be seen by name and is simply for management to ensure that our services are representative of the communities we serve.

We also want to ensure that all employees who have protected characteristics are fully supported and receive an equal opportunity to development opportunities and training and have recently set up a Recruitment and Career Progression working group lead by our Principal Social Worker to ensure that we support the right conditions for all our staff to be able to progress their career with Walsall Children's Services, should they wish to do so.

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

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

Children's Social Care has an active and comprehensive workforce development plan which supports employees at all levels of their career from student, through their first year of qualification (Assessed and Supported Year of Employment); Core Skills and Training for all staff; access to specialist Training and Development opportunities and a new Management Development programme for social care managers.

All our staff have the benefit of an Annual Performance Conversation every year which provides an opportunity to reflect on the achievements of the previous year; plan for the forthcoming year and for our staff to provide evidence of the many ways in which they have 'demonstrated the ways in which they work in ways which exemplify the Corporate expectations regarding our behaviour.

Due to the pandemic, our annual WR4C Workforce conference was held virtually this year between 28 September and 2 October. Our yearly staff conference provides an opportunity to connect with all our workforce across Children Services with the aim of:

- Looking back and celebrating our collective achievements throughout the last 12 months against our WR4C vision;
- Focussing/reflecting on particular areas of work, practice development priorities, highlighting new areas, programmes and projects through workshops;
- Looking forward and setting the direction of travel across Children's Services for the next 12 months.

With support from the corporate communication Team, we sent a daily email communication to all our staff re-iterating key messages arising throughout the conference, highlighting resources available to staff and inviting staff to further reflect on key issues. Our key note speaker this year was Dr Jenny Molloy, a care leaver and author who has worked extensively with the DfE, Ofsted, local authorities and higher education providers sharing her experiences and reflections of being a child in care.

Over the course of a week we delivered 22 workshops on themes including:

- Performance;
- Exploited and Missing Children;
- Resilient Communities workshop;
- Supporting children back into school following Covid 19;
- Exploring the issue of proportionality within the YJS;
- 'Equally Yours' – Reflecting on Equality within our practice;
- Overview of newly commissioned Special Education Needs and/or Disability Information, Advice and Support Service (SEND IASS);
- A series of themed Sharing Good Practice including: equality; safety planning; youth justice; working with teenagers;
- SEND.

In delivering these workshops we drew on the skills and talents of workers across Children's Services. Feedback from staff attending these presentations included:

- *It made me feel important. No matter what job role you do in the Council it is important for our Walsall families. We do our job to help Walsall children and each and every one of us plays a very important role in that.*
- *Really enjoyed the brain development session with the parenting Team. Great to pass this knowledge on to our parents.*
- *I really loved the workshop around safety planning around risks of exploitation - I am excited to use the learning in the plans I help build for my young people*
- *Youth offending service presentation on ethnicity and disproportionality provided lots of questions on how we work with young people and identity and their experiences, presentation was excellent"*
- *I have learned so much about CME, the session...was excellent in aiding my understanding of the assessment process for referrals re CME*
- *From Monday's webinar I reflected on how I speak with the young people, and will ensure I don't use jargon with them.*
- *Good workshop on supervision. I learned from the presenter and from partnering up with colleagues from social care.*

Staff were asked at the start of the Conference and following the closing webinar at the end of the week to post a key reflection they had as a direct result of attending a workshop. Key themes included:

- The importance of connectivity between the work across the directory;
- Learning from each other;



- Powerful keynote speaker highlighting the power of relationships and the importance of why we want to drive forward relationship based practice;
- The need to involve children and families in everything we do;
- Reflecting on language used;
- Working from home and the need to make time for yourself/breaks;
- Better understanding of key areas of work and tools to help practice;
- Good reflection following workshop from youth justice on disproportionality;
- Acknowledgement of the talent pool of staff we have;
- Opportunity to network across the directorate.

We have also created a Staff Conference Team folder to enable staff to access recordings of the webinars and workshops and other resources to maximise learning opportunities.

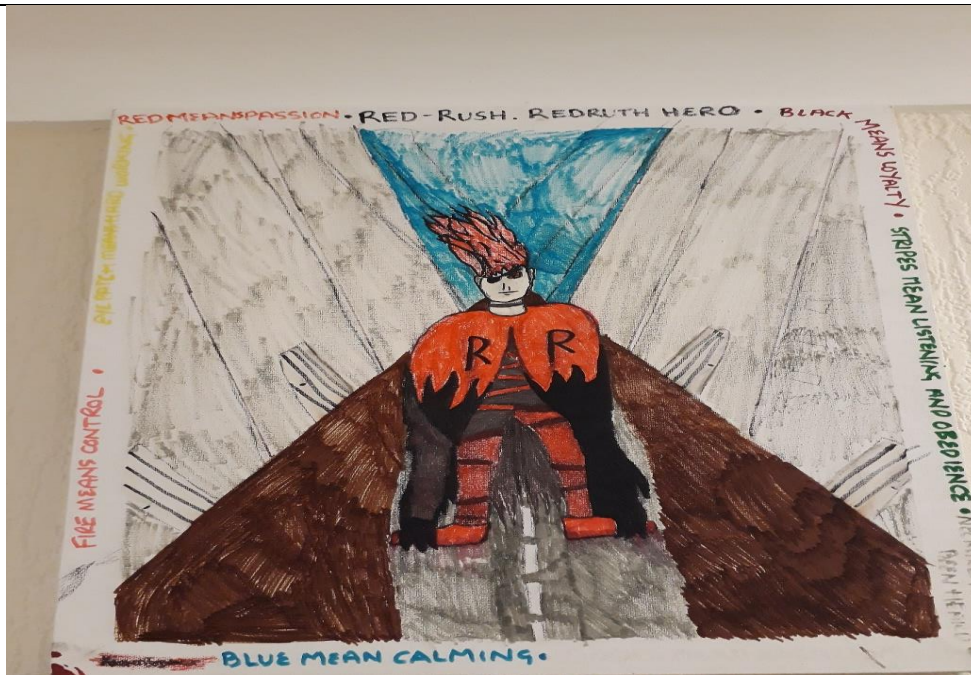
### **Staff Welfare:**

The Pandemic, resulting in lockdown in March 2020, required us to think differently about how we supported our staff, working largely from home, to ensure they felt connected with their peers, their line manager and the Senior Leadership Team. We have not been able to run the Schwartz Rounds programme since February when the theme under consideration was: *“What happens when you don’t get to say goodbye”*, due to the lockdown and the subsequent social distancing requirements. We are currently exploring how we move this programme into the virtual environment.

As a result, Teams across Children’s Services developed a range of daily and weekly virtual Team meetings, lunches, coffee breaks and ‘hugs’. The creativity our staff members showed during these early months showed itself in creating videos, on-line work based quizzes and activities to maintain Team connectivity. Mental Health first Aid and Emotional well-being top tips have been regularly shared across the Directorate. Staff tell us that they feel communication has been maintained throughout:

*“I feel that the communication between senior management and staff throughout the Coronavirus Period has been excellent.”*

The provision of PPE and establishing meaningful risk assessments for the children with whom we work, their families as well as individual staff risk assessments were key. Managers have acted to ensure that risk assessments have been in place to support all staff, including those who have continued to deliver face to face services throughout the pandemic. These have been revisited as information has emerged throughout the Pandemic in relation to the disproportionate effect of the coronavirus on colleagues from BAME Communities.



Art work from a 14 year old boy in one of our residential homes produced during lockdown 2020. 'Redrush hero' as described by himself was to capture what he thought about the adults working with him at Redruth Road his description of his artwork is:

- Black represents loyalty
- The stripes means listening to and obedience
- Blue represents calming
- Fire means control
- Eye patch means hard working
- Red is for passion
- Necklace means being heard

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

As a Directorate we are invested in working in a restorative way with each other, our partners and those children and families with whom we work. Restorative practice seeks to build healthy communities, increase social capital, decrease crime and antisocial behaviour, repair harm and restore relationships.

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

Complaints received (2020)	Statutory Complaints	Corporate Complaints	Compliments
Q1 (Jan – Mar)	11	35	14
Q2 (Apr – Jun)	11	28	5
Q3 (Jul – Sep)	4	21	6
Q4 (1 <sup>st</sup> Oct- 25 <sup>th</sup> Oct)	1	8	4

<b>Total Jan 2020 – 25<sup>th</sup> Oct 2020</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Total Jan – Dec 2019 (for comparison)</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>35</b>

The overall numbers are comparable with the previous year although Qtrs. 2 and 3 did see a drop in some activities which can be attributed to the Covid-19 lockdown. The trend for reduction in statutory complaints and a rise in corporate complaints has continued following previous advice from the regional complaints benchmarking group.

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

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

Some of the compliments we have received this year have included:

#### **Head teacher feedback on partnership work with the LA**

“I just wanted to take a minute to say thank you. For everything you all do, but especially for the last few months. The ongoing support and communication has been exceptional from all of your Teams and all areas of the Local Authority with whom we work. I really think we have found our rainbow - I've been a head now for longer than I care to remember, and I genuinely don't think I have ever felt as much a part of Walsall as I have recently. Together, we have become stronger.”

#### **Feedback from a Mum**

“It has been helpful that we have a social worker who is brilliant; she is the best social worker we have ever met. If you have to have a social worker, I would recommend C to anyone. She has helped us with emergency food since this virus, she is absolutely brilliant. I offered to make a donation for the food, but she said it wasn't necessary. If I phone C she comes back to me, she never ignores me – she is amazing. I am very grateful. She is a star. Since C has given me a kick up the backside, my health has actually improved. I was feeling quite low, was on anti-depressants. I am no longer on them and I am coping much better.”

#### **Feedback from looked after child:**

“I really liked M. M always did what he said he would and when he said he would.”

#### **Feedback from a Mum:**

“My situation has improved drastically. The social worker, N should be given a raise as she is so good. She is understanding, and when I have a problem, she helps me figure it out straight away. I have had loads of Social Worker's and they treated me like a child and like I don't know what I am doing, and I refused to let them in my house, but N is different, she understands me and is really nice and I really do appreciate her, I really do.”

#### **Feedback from young Person:**

“J is a really good social worker, I KNOW she really cares about me.”

**Feedback from parents:**

“Thank you C for arranging and facilitating family time on Eid for us and our 6 children. It is such a long time since we have been able to see them all face to face and we really appreciate the time and effort you put into arranging this”

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

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

**Early years:**

This service works with children of pre-school age to support foundation learning. Take up of access to 3 and 4 year old funding in the autumn 2020 was 92.7%; this represents a 4.4% reduction which may be explained in part by the impact of the pandemic.

Funding is available for 2 year olds who have an additional disadvantage. This includes children who are looked after or who have been adopted; children with a profound disability; children whose parents access specific benefits. Take up of this provision in the autumn 2020 was 61.9%. This is a significant reduction on last year's figure of 83/2% and again may be indicative of the impact of the pandemic.

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

**Attendance:**

This service supports schools, families and children to ensure admission to school and good attendance:

- A primary school child who was late and missing the start of each first lesson every day. Mum was a single parent with another child in Reception and a younger, pre-school child, for whom English was a second language. The Attendance Officer met with Mum and established that she had been made homeless and was now living in temporary accommodation at some distance from the school. Mum could not afford bus fares or a taxi and only had a single pushchair which meant she had to keep stopping so the children could rest. The Attendance Officer supported the school in locating a double pushchair from a local charity meaning the children now arrive for school on time. She has also ensured the school provide early help in assisting Mum to resolve her housing and benefit difficulties.
- Working with a family whose daughter has missed a considerable period of schooling due to mental health issues. A meeting was arranged, ensuring adherence to Covid-19 Safe requirements and social distancing regarding social distancing. Following the meeting a return to school on a reduced timetable was agreed. The Attendance Officer maintained contact throughout lockdown, providing an opportunity for the child to talk about her fears regarding a return to school and discuss the fact that, due to lockdown she was not very different to her peers now as they had also been off school for a long time. Although it is still a very slow process, the child is now attending school on a daily basis and whilst she doesn't stay for long there are supportive measures in place for her at school and the cycle with regards to school refusal has been broken.

**Inclusion:**

This service works with children, families and schools to ensure that Walsall schools are accessible for all children, including those with a hidden disability and those with learning difficulties or disabilities. This includes establishing a local offer and website to support access and 'self-serve'. Following discussion with parents, school and other colleagues it was identified that the current website is not easily accessible for all. With this in mind, we are now in the process of redesigning the website as per my previous email to ensure that it is fit for purpose. We will be piloting the test pages with stakeholders in the very near future including: children and young people throughout all school phases, parents, carers, SENDCOs and Head teachers with a view to receiving feedback which will shape the website moving forward.

**Early Help:**

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

- Mum was initially referred to access the virtual parenting programme on reducing parental conflict. Initially, due to her reluctance to join a group, the facilitators offered some 1:1 support, following which she then felt confident enough to join the group. Mum has reported that she has found the group sessions enjoyable and really helpful and states that she is "...able to take a step back when having conversations with her ex-partner".
- B was referred to the Early Help School Inclusion Team in November 2019 because B was at risk of becoming permanently excluded from primary school, having had a number of fixed term and unofficial exclusions. B had already experienced permanent exclusion from his previous school. B was struggling academically with poor concentration and found unstructured time in school very difficult. B's worker spent time with B to explore consequences and impact of behaviour and enabled B to complete some direct work. Support, advice and guidance was also provided to B's Mum to support her in managing B's behaviours at home. Regular meetings with school and the other agencies involved with B enabled the school to feel supported to explore and amend the level of support B received in school. The number of fixed term exclusions B received lessened over time as school explored and implemented different strategies to build on what worked for B. Contact with B was maintained throughout lockdown and, as a result, B now attends regularly and has not had any fixed term exclusions since returning in September. B reports feeling better about school and loves attending, he feels listened to and like the school want him there. Mom has spoken of how proud she is given child B's journey. B's school also recognise the success for B.

**Children's Social Care:**

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

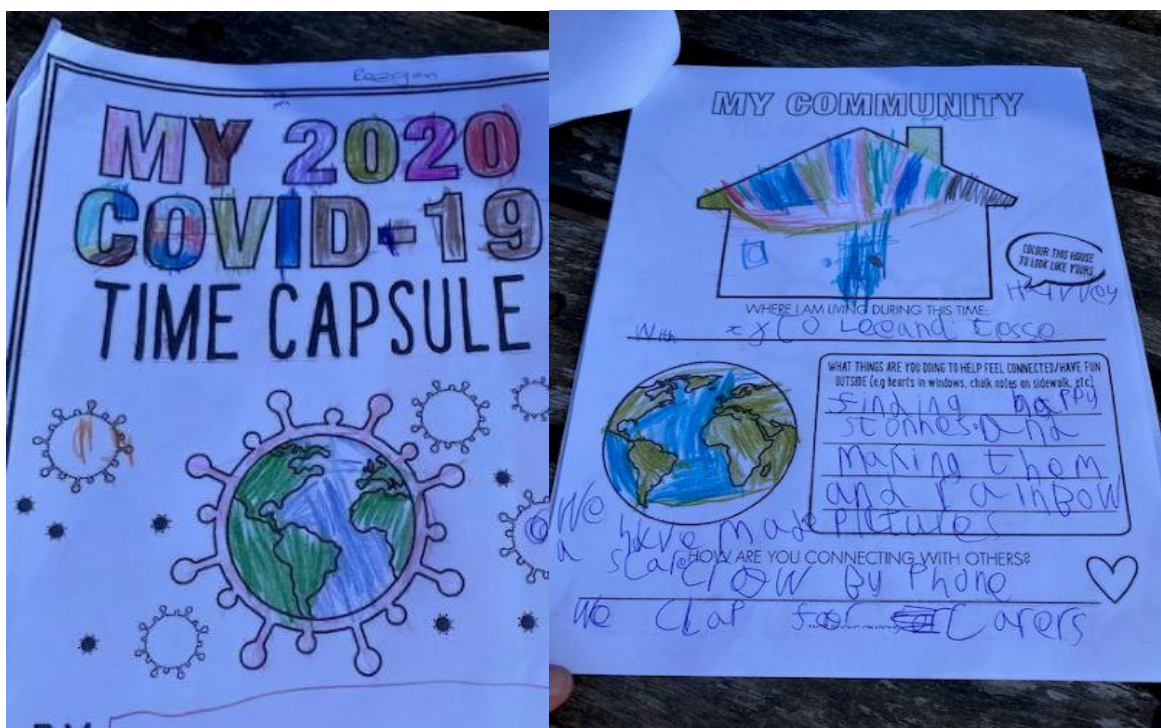
- The Exploitation Team delivered considerable amounts of training from Taxi drivers, schools, social workers and police partners looking at the issue of exploitation and how any child could be a victim. We include in this the gendered issue of abuse; not all Sexual Exploitation victims are girls and not all victims of Criminal Exploitation are male.
- E is a looked after child living in a residential setting and on his 13<sup>th</sup> birthday he received an experience voucher for a 30 minute Young Driver Lesson. E will learn the



basic driving skills needed for the road in a brand new dual-controlled Vauxhall Corsa SRI with one to one guidance from an experienced ADI Instructor and take home a personalised Young Driver log book as a reminder of the day. This will be a perfect introduction on to real road driving for youngsters. E is over the moon and said he is really looking forward completing this experience as it's a "...really cool thing to do". E went on to say he cannot believe he is being trusted to drive!!

- Family time ~ a Parent's contact with their child when they are in local authority care ~ moved to on line at the beginning of lockdown. Working with children aged between 2 and 5 years old of Polish origin who were trans-culturally placed, the support worker researched and learnt Polish nursery rhymes in order that she could engage the children in activities with their Mum during on-line contact. Other comments received from parents include:
  - Thank you for the video; I miss my children so much (a parent);
  - Thank you for setting up the extra contact. I'm proper chuffed (a parent);
  - The texts are working really well (a carer);
  - Thank you very much R. I can always call you and you make me feel better; you always help me (a Parent).
- An unaccompanied asylum seeking child who arrived with us in September 2019 and has been supported to learn English, access College and has joined a local football Team.

Throughout the lockdown period children with a social worker took part in the Covid-19 Time capsule project:



### The Virtual School:

The Virtual School supports and challenges schools and education providers as well children, young people, children who have been adopted and care leavers and their carers to reach their full education potential. It holds the Pupil Premium, additional funding available to

support the educational attainment and aspiration of looked after children and uses this creatively to support looked after children who are at risk of being excluded from school.

- In April 2020 the Department for Education announced they were providing digital devices (laptops, tablets and 4G routers) to children with a social worker, care leavers and disadvantaged year 10 students. The devices were provided to support remote education as well as enabling virtual contact between children, their social worker and other services during the coronavirus pandemic. Working with schools and social workers, we identified which children would require a device. We also identified children who would need access to the internet. All the devices were delivered with an in-built internet filtering system which enabled inappropriate internet sites to be blocked and inappropriate use monitored. Walsall were initially allocated 1494 digital devices. However, we were able to negotiate an additional 158 chrome books from the DfE to ensure that every disadvantaged year 10 student was provided with a device. Devices have now been delivered directly to primary and secondary schools and, for those of our children who live out of the borough borders or who are care leavers delivery has been achieved via their social worker or their transition worker. A further successful bid was made to the DfE in July 2020 which has ensured that vulnerable children who have become known to us since lockdown commenced can be supported to continue to access education.
- To support unaccompanied asylum seeking children newly arriving during lockdown, one of the Virtual School mentor's has become an accredited ESOL trainer and is now delivering additional ESOL training which supplements the on line learning available via schools and college.
- The Virtual school has provided mentoring and support to a number of children and young people struggling with not being in education at the beginning of lockdown and being in school during lockdown. This has included support in class, provision of learning on the 'Bramble' learning platform, home visits to support children and their carers and arranging alternative education provision for an older child whose original educational placement had shut and whose placement was at risk of breaking down.
- The Virtual School has also funded Punjabi lessons for two children placed trans- racially to ensure they could continue to learn and practice their first language.

### **Walsall Youth Justice Service:**

Walsall Youth Justice Service is a statutory multi-agency partnership which has the principle aims of preventing and reducing youth offending. The Service works with young people from ages 10 (the age of criminal responsibility in England) to 17. When young people become 18 they are transferred to Probation Services. These young people enter the system via a Police disposal such as a community resolution or a youth caution and then via a conviction a court.

Young people within the youth justice system are overrepresented within many systems such as the looked after system or are disproportionately affected by issues such as special educational needs and exclusion from school. These issues are then amplified for black young people and young people from dual heritage backgrounds. We also know there is a growing issue of exploitation for young people in Walsall and young people subject to Court Orders are also the victim of being used to supply drugs around Walsall, the region and the rest of the country. The Service are currently working with several young people that are actively involved in running 'county lines' and practitioners and managers from within the

Service are actively involved in partnership risk management work to safeguard these children.

The following data is taken from a full youth justice system disproportionality analysis covering two full years from April 1<sup>st</sup> 2018 to March 31<sup>st</sup> 2020.

### Ethnicity for All Offences

Ethnicity by Population and Number of Offences			
Ethnicity	Percentage 10-17 Population	Percentage of Offences	Difference
White	72% (20,253)	68% (455)	-4%
Mixed	5% (1,396)	19% (126)	14%
Black or Black British	3% (723)	10% (63)	7%
Asian or Asian British	19% (5,473)	2% (12)	-17%
Chinese or Other	1% (423)	1% (4)	0%

### Ethnicity for All Young People who have Committed Offences

Ethnicity by Population and Number of Offenders				
Ethnicity	Percentage 10-17 Population	Percentage of Offenders	Difference	Number of offences / offender
White	72% (20,253)	66% (216)	-6%	3.20
Mixed	5% (1,396)	18% (39)	13%	3.32
Black or Black British	3% (723)	11% (24)	8%	2.63
Asian or Asian British	19% (5,473)	4% (8)	-15%	1.50
Chinese or Other	1% (423)	1% (3)	0%	1.33

### Ethnicity and Age

Ethnicity by Age						
Age of Offender	White	Black or Black British	Mixed	Asian or Asian British	Chinese or Other	Total
12	4 (3%)	0 (0%)	8 (17%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	12 (6%)
13	21 (15%)	1 (4%)	2 (4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	24 (11%)
14	25 (18%)	4 (14%)	6 (13%)	1 (14%)	1 (33%)	37 (17%)
15	38 (27%)	5 (18%)	11 (24%)	1 (14%)	0 (0%)	55 (26%)
16	41 (29%)	11 (39%)	7 (15%)	1 (14%)	1 (33%)	61 (29%)
17	27 (19%)	7 (25%)	12 (26%)	4 (57%)	1 (33%)	51 (24%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>212</b>

### Gender and Ethnicity

Ethnicity by Gender						
Gender	White	Black or Black British	Mixed	Asian or Asian British	Chinese or Other	Total
Female	21 (15%)	2 (8%)	5 (13%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	28 (13%)
Male	118 (85%)	22 (92%)	34 (87%)	7 (100%)	3 (100%)	184 (87%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>212</b>

### Ethnicity for Categories of Offences

Ethnicity by Offence Type						
Offence Type	White	Black or Black British	Mixed	Asian or Asian British	Chinese or Other	Total



Violent Crime	168 (63%)	21 (40%)	67 (67%)	3 (38%)	1 (100%)	260 (61%)
Acquisitive Crime	73 (27%)	11 (21%)	11 (11%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	95 (22%)
Drugs Offences	15 (6%)	8 (15%)	10 (10%)	4 (50%)	0 (0%)	37 (9%)
Breach Offences	11 (4%)	12 (23%)	11 (11%)	1 (12%)	0 (0%)	35 (8%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>428</b>

### Ethnicity for Categories of Disposals

Disposal Group	White	Black or Black British	Mixed	Asian or Asian British	Chinese or Other	Total
Custody	62 (14%)	5 (8%)	24 (19%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	91 (14%)
Youth Rehabilitation Order	122 (27%)	17 (28%)	34 (27%)	1 (13%)	0 (0%)	174 (27%)
Referral Order	174 (39%)	25 (41%)	43 (34%)	1 (13%)	0 (0%)	243 (38%)
Conditional Caution	47 (10%)	11 (18%)	14 (11%)	2 (25%)	2 (50%)	76 (12%)
Caution	44 (10%)	3 (5%)	11 (9%)	4 (50%)	2 (50%)	64 (10%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>449</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>648</b>

Between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020, there were disproportionately more young people from black or black British and mixed ethnicity groups in the young offenders' cohort, compared to the number of young people from these groups in the 10-17 population. Young offenders are more likely to be male, with few differences across ethnic groups.

Young people with white and mixed ethnic groups committed the highest number of offences per offender. Young people from black or black British and mixed ethnicity groups committed a disproportionately high percentage of drugs offences, breach offences and violent crime and young people with a mixed ethnicity background are more likely to be criminalised at a younger age.

Young people with mixed ethnicity were given a disproportionately high percentage of the most severe disposals and the amount of severe disposals do not appear to correspond with a higher number of severe offences committed by these young people. The severity of these types of offence does not account for the severity of the disposals in each case. In fact, young people with a mixed ethnicity background are disproportionately more likely to receive custody disposals for less severe violent crimes.

To supplement the Youth Justice Service's Disproportionality work, we are working with an organisation to deliver a project called 'Kitchen Table Talks'. This project aims to engage with parents of young people within the youth justice system using an informal setting with the incentive of coffee and cake. Parents are asked to provide their views on disparity in the justice system and be part of solution circles to improve youth justice services for their children.

- Z was made subject to Youth Rehabilitation Order in the Youth Court for an offence of possession of a knife and robbery. His Youth Justice Officer was struggling to engage

him successfully in his interventions and to support this a referral was made for Z's mother to attend the Kitchen Table Talks programme. Z's mother was initially sceptical of the programme but was able to provide invaluable feedback on her own difficulties managing his behaviour at home, her personal perceptions of the police and her views of injustice relating to Z's co-defendant within the Court. Following the first Kitchen Table Talks gathering, Z's grandmother also attended the next meeting and the peer-support group helped the family develop ideas and suggestions to improve the family relationships and to help Z engage with his Order. Both Z and his mother's perception of professionals in the Youth Justice Service changed and all parties were able to work together to help Z stay out of trouble and ultimately remain in the family home.



"My art piece is to show that there's good and bad to everything. In the current situation of the world it seems as though everything is bad, hence the red tears. And even though we need to acknowledge the bad side and be extra careful in these dangerous times, we all need to pay attention to the good parts that peek through. This is what the gold tears represent. Every now and then, the gold moments pop up and sometimes we don't even realise what just happened until after.

We all need to start appreciating the gold bits. My art piece is very Yin and Yang. They contradict but also complement each other. Much like the current climate of the world."

*Art work and thoughts produced by one of our young people during lockdown.*

## Walsall Council Equality and Diversity Information

### Directorate Report

### December 2020

Directorate	Economy, Environment and Communities
Executive Director	Simon Neilson
Contact officer	Neil Taylor
E-mail	Neil.Taylor@Walsall.gov.uk

### Corporate Equality Objectives

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

We will:-

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

### Equality Act 2010 Protected Characteristics

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

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

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

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

	people who may not be able to make informed or balanced decisions about gambling due to a mental impairment, alcohol or drugs.”		
Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Licensing	<p>This document contains the Licence Conditions and Information with regard to driving, operating or owning a PHV or HC. It contains specific sections relating to passengers with disabilities, Guide for loading and securing a Wheelchair and passenger into a vehicle, that the grant of a Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licence is dependent on the vehicle being brand new and wheelchair accessible, that drivers must carry guide or assistance dogs belonging to passengers, free of charge.</p> <p>All new and existing drivers are undertaking a pre licensing Driver Training Course which has recently been updated and includes disability awareness, CSE and other equality related matters.</p>		<p><a href="https://go.walsall.gov.uk/taxis">https://go.walsall.gov.uk/taxis</a></p> <p><a href="https://go.walsall.gov.uk/Portals/0/Uploads/Licensing/Licence%20conditions%20MASTER%20UPDATED%20MARCH%202017.pdf">https://go.walsall.gov.uk/Portals/0/Uploads/Licensing/Licence%20conditions%20MASTER%20UPDATED%20MARCH%202017.pdf</a></p> <p><a href="https://go.walsall.gov.uk/Portals/0/images/importeddocuments/criminalmotoring_conviction_guidelines.pdf">https://go.walsall.gov.uk/Portals/0/images/importeddocuments/criminalmotoring_conviction_guidelines.pdf</a></p>
Green Space Strategy 2018-2022	<p>The Green Space strategy looks at the future management, maintenance and development of green spaces across the borough, raising green space quality and putting in place a series of service and process improvements. Walsall Council will be responsible for leading on the delivery of the strategy, but it will need to be a partnership approach to help deliver the vision and aims. Working in partnership, we continue to build on existing partnerships with agencies such as West Midlands Police and Council departments, as well as new</p>		<p><a href="https://go.walsall.gov.uk/green-spacestrategy">https://go.walsall.gov.uk/green-spacestrategy</a></p>

	partnerships with the wider third sector and diverse communities. There will also be involvement from friends' groups and other community based organisations.		
Cemetery and Crematorium Rules and Regulations	To guide service users on the expectations of the Council when cemetery and crematorium facilities are accessed.		<a href="https://go.walsall.gov.uk/death_and_bereavement">https://go.walsall.gov.uk/death_and_bereavement</a>
Burial options	To inform service users of the options available from the Council for burial in Walsall cemeteries.		<a href="https://go.walsall.gov.uk/burial_arrangements">https://go.walsall.gov.uk/burial_arrangements</a>
Out of hours burial arrangements	To inform service users of the access and scope of the out of hours burial procedures for burials in Walsall cemeteries.		<a href="https://go.walsall.gov.uk/out_of_hours_burials">https://go.walsall.gov.uk/out_of_hours_burials</a>
Register Office services	To inform service users of the full range of services available centrally through the Register Office.		<a href="https://go.walsall.gov.uk/register-office">https://go.walsall.gov.uk/register-office</a>
Municipal Waste Management Strategy 2004 - 2024	<p>The strategy was approved by Cabinet May 2004 and sets out the strategic framework, options and direction for the management of waste including collections and disposal in the Borough for the following 20 years.</p> <p>An option was chosen and developed, with ongoing strategic changes being made to waste collection and disposal arrangements to deliver the highest level of sustainability by maximising recycling, maximising the diversion of waste from landfill and minimising the total amount of waste produced whilst remaining understandable and straight forward for residents.</p> <p>Adjustments to the standard wheeled bin service are made for residents who produce</p>	✓	

	<p>more waste due to a health problem or disability and for those who are unable to move a wheeled bin due to age or a disability. A new strategy is planned for 2021 to take account of the Government's resources and waste strategy and the new environment bill.</p>		
Urban Forestry Strategy for Walsall Council 2016 - 2026	<p>Sets out how trees, woodland and urban forest in the borough will be managed over the next 10 years and links and informs other strategies such as the Green Space Strategy, Highways Strategy and Waste Strategy. As part of the strategy the health and safety of both people and property are protected through risk management and pro-active maintenance of the tree stock.</p>		<a href="https://go.walsall.gov.uk/Portals/0/images/importeddocuments/urban_forestry_strategy_draft_march_2016.pdf">https://go.walsall.gov.uk/Portals/0/images/importeddocuments/urban_forestry_strategy_draft_march_2016.pdf</a>
Environmental Improvement Team Plan	<p>The Clean and Green Environmental Improvement Team play a part in making Walsall an attractive place to live work and play, providing a network of safe, accessible green spaces which are full of positive activity which encourages our communities to become healthier. This can be achieved by consultation and involvement with all sections of our diverse community to deliver the green space strategy and the key outcomes of the transformation Fund and by working across service areas, with key partners, organisations and other services.</p>	✓	
Walsall Strategic Economic Plan	<p>The Walsall SEP was approved in 2015 and sets out the strategic economic vision for the borough under the key themes of People, Place and Business, with the aim of promoting</p>		<a href="https://www.walsallintelligence.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2019/10/Walsall-SEP-2015.pdf">https://www.walsallintelligence.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2019/10/Walsall-SEP-2015.pdf</a>

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



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

	authority to deal with breaches of planning legislation. It also identifies how the Council will communicate with complainants.		
Transport Strategy 2017-2022	<p>The transport strategy follows the framework of the West Midlands Local Transport Plan (Movement for Growth) and Black Country Core Strategy and identifies proposals and programmes which will improve and develop the transport network across Walsall by;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encouraging economic growth;</li> <li>• Stimulating regeneration;</li> <li>• Improving the borough's environment;</li> <li>• Making the borough a healthier and safer place to live;</li> <li>• Providing benefits to all sectors of the borough's diverse communities</li> </ul>	✓	<a href="https://go.walsall.gov.uk/transport_strategies">https://go.walsall.gov.uk/transport_strategies</a>
Guidance for local authorities in England on administering and enforcing the Blue Badge disabled parking scheme.	<p>The Blue Badge (Disabled Persons' Parking) Scheme was introduced in 1971 under Section 21 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 ('the 1970 Act').</p> <p>The aim of the scheme is to help disabled people with severe mobility problems to access goods and services, by allowing them to park close to their destination. The scheme is open to eligible disabled people irrespective of whether they are travelling as a driver or as a passenger. The scheme provides a national range of on-street parking concessions to Blue Badge holders. It allows them to park without charge or time limit in</p>		<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/519091/blue-badge-scheme-local-authority-guidance-paper.pdf">https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/519091/blue-badge-scheme-local-authority-guidance-paper.pdf</a>

	otherwise restricted on-street parking environments, and allows them to park on yellow lines for up to three hours, unless a loading ban is in place.		
Playing Pitch Strategy	Ensuring the borough has a Playing Pitch estate that is accessible and meets the needs of the local community.	✓	
Walsall Road Safety Strategy	The Walsall Road Safety Strategy sets out Walsall's local vision and supports the regional aspiration to reduce killed and seriously injured casualties (KSI). The strategy also recognises the need to develop a more holistic approach to project appraisal and evaluation to ensure that targeted improvements and initiatives, consistent with the United Nation's Safer Systems approach, are delivered. This approach supports a vision of improved quality of life and equality for all our residents.	✓	
Climate Emergency Action Plan	<p>The plan sets out the initial opportunities identified by the Council to reduce carbon emissions relating to the organisation's own operations in the first instance.</p> <p>It is recognised that climate change affects all sections of society, however some groups may require additional support to make the necessary lifestyle and behavioural changes than others.</p>		<u>Walsall Council Climate Emergency Action Plan 2020 - 2025</u>
Equality Protocol	This protocol outlines the aims, expectations and practices from our Councillors, managers, employees,	✓	

	workers and partners in relation to equality and diversity.		
Equality objectives and information for the Public Sector Equality Duty	Equality objectives are based on available information through research, consultation and engagement and equality impact assessments. They help identify internal and external targets that will improve the collection of equality information, and address the most persistent areas of inequalities faced by both employees and customers.		<a href="https://go.walsall.gov.uk/equality_documents">https://go.walsall.gov.uk/equality_documents</a>
Employment Monitoring	The annual Employment Monitoring Report is part of the requirement to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty as set out in the Equality Act, 2010.		<a href="https://go.walsall.gov.uk/equality_documents">https://go.walsall.gov.uk/equality_documents</a>
Walsall For All Priorities	<p>The programme builds on existing knowledge and learning from local and national projects. The Project;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognises its strengths as we develop new activities;</li> <li>• Use knowledge of community spaces, networks and groups;</li> <li>• Ensure equal opportunities for all groups and individuals, regardless of their background;</li> <li>• Support communities and individuals to be engaged, enabled and empowered;</li> <li>• Bring partners and people together to drive our programme forward;</li> <li>• Learn from others and adapt the programme to ensure it is creating impact.</li> </ul>		<a href="https://www.walsallforall.co.uk/">https://www.walsallforall.co.uk/</a>

## Part 2 Equality Impact Assessments November 2019 to October 2020

Service	Title	Contact officer name
Public Health	Healthy Child Programme 0-19	Emily Smith / Esther Higdon
Planning	Walsall Planning Service Transformation	Shawn Fleet
Regulatory Services	Food Law Enforcement Service Plan 19-20	David Elrington
Regeneration and Development	Walsall Town Centre Masterplan	Hannah Willetts / Valdheer Rajania
Blue Badge	Online Blue Badge Application	Janet Read
Regulatory Services	Regulation Of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 and Investigatory Powers Act 2016 Policies	Lorraine Boothman/David Elrington
Community, Equality and Cohesion	ITTE Contract	Brian Fitzgerald
Localities and Partnerships	Community Safety Plan	Helen Kindon
Community, Equality and Cohesion	Equality and Diversity Objectives	Brian Fitzgerald
Localities and Partnerships	Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking being implemented in Walsall	Helen Kindon
Community, Equality and Cohesion	Equality and Diversity Protocol	Brian Fitzgerald
Community, Equality and Cohesion	Sign Language Cafes	Brian Fitzgerald
Community, Equality and Cohesion	Equality and Diversity ITTE Tender	Brian Fitzgerald

## Part 3 Equality and Diversity Objectives

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

#### **Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment**

Community Protection has supported work to develop a Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment in an attempt to identify and work towards addressing the needs of this protected group. This supportive approach is reflected in the practice of the Community Protection Team when dealing with unauthorised encampments. To assist in providing better quality encampment conditions we are to provide a short stay transit site for travellers passing through the Borough as an alternative to unauthorised encampments. The facility provides basic sanitation and clean water, in addition to providing the opportunity to social distance. Where vulnerabilities are identified in the occupants of an unauthorised encampment the enforcement process is modified to take account of any identified needs.

#### **Covid-19 Enforcement**

The Council has been working to implement Government Covid-19 legislation and guidelines. Council officers have been taking a light touch approach in order to encourage the public to follow government rules and guidelines and have been working closely with other agencies. In carrying out enforcement work of this nature; officers having been paying close attention to protected groups and tailoring their enforcement approach appropriately.

#### **Covid-19 Vaccination and Testing**

Council officers have been working closely with NHS colleagues in the provision of Covid-19 testing and vaccination sites during 2020 and will continue to do so during 2021. Each vaccination site has been assessed to ensure it is accessible to all and to ensure protected groups able to use the centre effectively.

#### **Community Protection Enforcement Work**

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

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

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

This can often take place on an industrial scale through:

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

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

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

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

### **Transport and Active Travel**

The West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan aims to improve the accessibility of development sites to generate growth and jobs, whilst promoting active travel and improving air quality. The Black Country Core Strategy has similar goals, aiming to improve access to employment, improve road safety and improve air quality. The WMSTP is under constant review in the light of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Transport choices have been assessed with regard to social distancing with active travel choices being more effective in social distancing terms, however work is currently being undertaken regarding safe travel choices for groups excluded from active travel options. The Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Walsall also aims to improve employment prospects, promote active travel and physical Activity, improve air quality, improve road safety and improve access to healthcare. The findings of the Health Impact Assessment show that, overall, the Scheme is expected to make a positive contribution to the objectives of local and regional planning policy.

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

### **Covid-19 Community Response**

Our Resilient Communities Team has worked closely with community groups and volunteers to help provide the support needed by vulnerable groups throughout the pandemic lockdowns. Hard to reach groups have been targeted not only with the provision of food but more importantly with the provision of support and contact. Socially distanced doorstep visits and scheduled telephone calls by volunteers have helped to maintain communication and support those whose mental wellbeing has been adversely affected. The work in Walsall has been recognised nationally and has been praised in the media for its approach to social inclusion.

### **Locality Team**

The Locality Team regularly works with local community organisations to identify local concerns and support local plans of action across Walsall Partnership. An example of such collaboration and partnership include the Mossley Big Local, who taught its community members British Sign Language in order to engage with Deaf people.

The Team has also been involved in and developed various local initiatives across the four localities of the borough, North, South, East and West. This has included working with local foodbanks, supermarkets, retailers and the voluntary and community groups, especially during the current pandemic. As a result, information leaflets were sent out in various community languages across the targeted areas of the borough to enable safeguarding and to promote 'safe distance and social distancing information.

### **Equalities Function**

Within the Community, Equality and Cohesion section we oversee the corporate Consultation and Equalities function. The role of this advisory service is to ensure the Council's compliance with Equality Act and related legislation. We coordinate Corporate Equality Group (CEG) meetings and agendas with the Chief Executive's office, engaging with Trade Unions and Equality Champions.

This year has seen a shift in thinking about how we deliver equalities through CEG. Two workshops were delivered with the Group to determine the way forward. This has included considerations in the appointment of a Vice Chair for the Group as well as ongoing discussions around the role of the Equality Champion and agenda setting.

As part of the equalities function, we publicise the Council's achievements under the public sector equality duty and oversee implementation of the Equalities Protocol. These are reviewed and approved through CEG.

We promote inclusion in the corporate training. The coronavirus pandemic became a challenge to deliver the different methods of equality learning. The online e-learning modules, which focus on legal knowledge and management application of equality and diversity continue to be delivered without any impact.

However, the bespoke and interactive Equally Yours, a game that is used in a group environment to raise awareness and tackle potential bias or prejudice, could not be delivered face to face. Instead, this has been reworked to allow delivery virtually. It remains a very popular approach to learning, using personal experience as a starting point, and continues to be used by many Council services that are key to equitable delivery to customers.

The Unconscious Bias and Inter-cultural training programmes concluded this year. These sessions were aimed at managers and front line staff, with the aim to provide different perspectives on diversity and equality, as well as appreciation of personal experiences and biases. The feedback has demonstrated a desire to continue with these programmes and discussions are ongoing with Learning and Development around a second round of delivery.

Equality is integral to the Corporate Induction programme. However, because the programme could not be delivered face-to-face this year, again owing to the pandemic, equality updates were provided via audio, for both managers and new starters, to enable them to better understand the equalities function.



### **Prevent**

The Prevent Coordinator and Prevent Education Officer work alongside partner organisations including, police and health, together with our diverse communities and endeavour to engage with them on a regular basis in order to highlight and mitigate equality issues. Documents that drive this approach are:

- Locality Model;
- Community Safety Plan;
- Individual Risk Assessment;
- Contest Delivery Plan;
- Prevent Delivery Plan;
- Prevent Communications Strategy.

Other sources of data include the Counter Terrorism and Border Security Act 2019, Prevent Duty 2015, Contest Strategy 2018 and the Walsall Counter Terrorism Local Profile (CTLP), compiled by Counter Terrorism Unit.

### **Community Safety**

The Community Safety Team works with individuals and local community organisations to identify and respond to local concerns and incidents effecting entire communities. A key aspect of its work is the development of information and support methodologies for individuals, various groups and communities relating to crime and disorder.

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

### **Consultation and Listening to what people say**

Community engagement is an ongoing process if it is to have meaningful outcomes. All consultation should have a clear purpose and be designed to ensure that the information gathered is what is wanted, meaningful and can inform the required outcomes. Results should be published. Especially to the people who have taken part and they should be aware of the reason behind the consultation.

Consultation is useful for gathering information and testing perceptions, but more in depth engagement using dialogues with resident of all communities and service users is invaluable in understanding the underlying drivers for using a service and the values of that service to the individual.

### **Town Centre Management**

The Town Centre Management Team has opened up dialogue with the Walsall Disability Providers Forum to ensure that people with disabilities and organisations supporting disabled services are given the opportunity to feed into the Plan. Colleagues from the Team have attended Forum meetings to present plans and encourage and invite feedback from Forum members.

### **Locality Team**

The Locality Team has supported local voluntary and community groups to develop educational and social activities both for and with targeted communities. This has included engagement with faith communities, particularly in Gurdwaras, Mosques and Churches.

Another example of an initiative empowering communities is the StreetWatch Initiative. StreetWatch is a community led initiative, made up of volunteers who are at least 18 years old. They carry out street patrols, but have no police powers. The groups are managed by a coordinator, who is part of the group. Their job includes:

- keeping a volunteer list;
- providing advice, guidance and support;
- regularly speaking with the local policing Team.

The local policing Team also look at the forum before the patrols take place, to know where the group is going. With the support of the Team, the Police can enable the local community to be trained in reporting crime, community litter pick and encouraging communities to report issues (such as a fly-tipping leaflet produced in different languages) across the borough.

### **Equalities Function**

As part of our role in assuring the Council's compliance with equality impact assessments, we often advise on how to directly consult with people possessing protected characteristics, ranging from those with sensory needs to LGBTQ communities, black and ethnic minorities or refugees, migrants and new communities.

Based on our identification of local needs, the Council, which was successful in obtaining funding for Integration Area Programme, publicises its work through the Walsall for All programme.

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

The programme consists of four priorities and each of those include empowering local communities to resolve equality issues, by direct engagement and through supporting local projects. The range of funded local projects, upcoming events and achieved case studies can be accessed on the Walsall for All website and the newsletters.

### **Priority 1 - Connecting Across Communities**

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

Walsall for All has supported the delivery of over 20 projects with local and national organisations to target residents in various geographical areas, cultural and social groups and those with protected characteristics.

These are a mixture of Innovation Grant funded projects and commissioned projects. Examples include:

- Walsall Community Dialogue Project and Walsall Community Recognition Awards by The Faith and Belief Forum;
- Walsall for All Pledge in partnership with Brap;
- Deaf Support Project by Deaf Support and Care Services Ltd;
- Creative Factory Workshop Inclusion Programme by Walsall Creative Factory.

## Case Study: Walsall for All Films



To promote the ambition of Walsall as a vibrant and diverse place, the Team worked closely with Method in Motion and Walsall communities to produce two films in autumn 2020 (filming took place in September 2020 before new coronavirus restrictions were introduced). These were entitled [“The Town That We’ve Built”](#) and [“Welcome to Walsall”](#)

### The aims of the video campaign were:

- To raise awareness of the Walsall For All programme among those living, working or studying in Walsall;
- To showcase the positive work happening across Walsall to bring communities together
- To celebrate Walsall as a diverse borough.



Photo 1 - A same-sex couple signing Welcome to Walsall in BSL

The video featured various residents and organisations, many of whom had already been working in partnership with Walsall for All.

There was a particular focus on women, older people, newly arrived communities, ethnic minorities, LGBT+, those with disabilities, young people and residents whose English is not their first language.

Both videos received mostly positive reactions, with 40.8k Facebook views on “The Town That We’ve Built” and 19.3k Facebook views on “Welcome to Walsall”.

People who engaged with the video said they were proud of their town and recognised individuals they knew, creating a sense of pride.

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

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

Walsall for All has worked closely with schools, local youth groups and a national organisation to encourage young people to support their community, as well as encouraging learning around faith, belief, culture and British Values. These include:

- [Walsall Youth Ambassadors](#) programme by the National Youth Agency;
- [Walsall Arts for All](#), in partnership with Arts Connect, Walsall Cultural Education Partnership, Ormiston Sheffield Community Academy and Baz Chapman, an independent arts and education consultant;
- [School Linking Programme](#) in partnership with The Linking Network
- UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools.

## Case study – Walsall Youth Ambassadors



The National Youth Agency (NYA), alongside Kicsters, has been working with Walsall for All to deliver Your Voice Now, bringing young people together from across Walsall to tackle local issues through social action.

Youth Ambassadors are defined as those who do good things on behalf of all young people that makes a difference. They inspire young people and give them a

voice in the local community.

Covid-19 changed the way this project was delivered. Sarah Tiffany, NYA Youth Work Specialist, mentioned: “Moving onto an online platform was challenging, yet exciting. NYA trained staff on platforms, writing policies, new risk assessments and writing a digital programme for young people. It made the programme accessible for young people who struggled socially and may not usually join face-to-face sessions.”

Eight Youth Ambassadors took part in regular meetings, including virtual events. One ambassador said: “The sessions were fun. We developed leadership and communication skills. This opportunity provided that stepping stone for me.”

The NYA created a project that was inclusive and informal in its approach. It enabled young people to work at their own pace. The project has created a legacy by incorporating a local youth organisation [Kicsters] to carry on the work.

### Priority 3 - Working and Contributing Together

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

The work focused on this priority has expanded over the last year. Projects have been re-purposed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. These include:

- ESOL courses which have moved to online platforms, as well as producing home learning books for learners who may not be I.T. proficient or are unable to access the internet;
- DWP Community Connectors supporting women across Walsall in moving forward and promoting employment, education and training opportunities. Recently, the Empowering Women and Motivate Your Mind workshops have taken place online due to coronavirus restrictions;
- Influencing the way the Council looks at Equality and Diversity by setting up a group where various members of staff can share their ideas around the way in which the Council celebrates/raises awareness of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion events;
- Walsall Works - Supporting local people who face barriers to employment, such as ex-offenders and women who have been affected by domestic violence, to find employment that is right for them.
  - Walsall Works usually runs two big Expos a year, showcasing all the local employment opportunities on offer. Due to Covid-19, this had to be moved online, so with our support, they delivered an online Expo.



- Working in partnership with DWP to launch 'Walsall Diversity Project' with the Black Country Chamber of Commerce to conduct research and deliver a conference for businesses and employers to encourage diversity and inclusion in their workforces.
  - The Chamber is expected to engage 60-150 businesses in the survey and engage at least half of these businesses in a conference around diversity and inclusion best practice;
  - The Chamber will also support them to commit to pledges around ensuring their workforce is diverse and inclusive.

### Case study – English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)



Photo 2 - ESOL students from All Saints Church Darlaston at the Leather Museum.

The need for free, community based, accessible English language provision has long been seen as a solution to improve integration, cohesion and employment and address many of the inequalities suffered by migrant communities.

Working with strategic partners including West Midlands Police, local primary schools, places of worship, and health and social care services, Walsall for All has established 31 separate English language provisions, for 30 communities across the borough. Some catering for the newly arrived communities in Walsall from Italy, Romania, Norway, Afghanistan, Ghana, West Africa and Sri Lanka, whilst others catered for many long-established migrant communities who have, in the past, found classes inaccessible.

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic and in order not to disadvantage the participants currently engaged and accessing provision, we transferred to online delivery.

Our classroom-based delivery has seen almost 1,000 learners accessing the ESOL provision across Walsall and we are currently hosting 12 online provisions with over 400 participants accessing the online provision.

### Priority 4 - Living Together

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

The work around this priority includes:

- Walsall Hate Crime Reduction Initiative, which aims to raise awareness of hate crime in many ways. It is made up of the following elements: reporting, research, support for those affected by hate crime, restorative justice and public awareness;
- Working closely with the National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups to support the needs of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in Walsall;
- Developing a Welcome Pack and Buddying Scheme in partnership with Nash Dom CIC to support newly arrived communities with information on rights and responsibilities, accessing services, learning English, financial support and much more.

### Case Study – Walsall Hate Crime Reduction Initiative

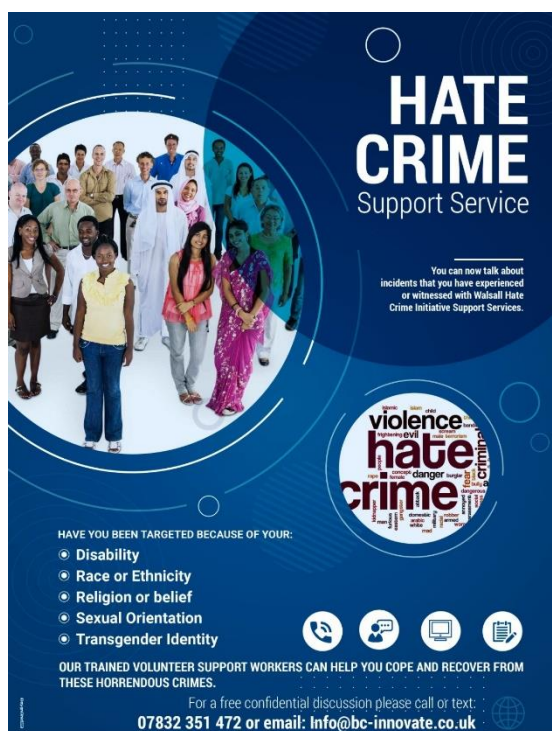


Photo 3 - Poster advertising the Hate Crime Support Service, run by Black Country Innovate CIC.

Walsall for All works closely with partner organisations like Black Country Innovate CIC, as well as local and regional police forces and other community organisations to address and reduce hate crime in the borough through the Walsall Hate Crime Reduction Initiative.

From monitoring and reporting of local tensions online to funding and supporting initiatives such as Black Country Innovate's 'Hate Crime Support Service' and the recruitment of 'Bystander Intervention Ambassadors', Walsall for All is committed to widening understanding of hate as a crime, encouraging victims and witnesses of the importance of reporting hate crime, bringing perpetrators to justice and providing support to those who are victims.

In October 2019 as part of Hate Crime Awareness Week, the Walsall Hate Crime Reduction Initiative was featured on BBC Midlands Today, where two ambassadors bravely shared their experiences of hate crime, as well as raising awareness of the project.

### Prevent

The key priorities for Prevent are clearly contained within the Community Safety Plan, i.e. to support local communities and institutions to challenge and reject the message of extremism.

Prevent in Walsall is delivered in partnership by a wide range of organisations including the Police, the Council, the NHS, Fire services and a number of community groups. Together, we recognise that the best long term solution to preventing terrorism is to stop people becoming terrorists in the first place. To deliver this message effectively, we are fully committed to working alongside community groups within Walsall.

### **Community Safety**

The Community Safety Team has supported a wide range of local voluntary and community groups, such as Neighbourhood Watch, to develop educational and social activities both for and with targeted communities that have experienced crime and disorder.

Working with diverse partners such as Locality Managers, StreetWatch initiatives and the Police, The Team works to enable the local community to be trained in initiatives such as reporting crime, community litter picking, and encouraging communities to recognise and report issues developed and supported across the borough.

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

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

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

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

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

A Directorate Management Team Charter is in place which states:

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

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

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

The Charter covers aspects of behaviour including being Supportive (spending time to get to know people); Respect (respecting colleagues and modelling good behaviour); being Positive (celebrating success and acknowledging individual contributions); Empowering (encouraging

innovation and valuing diversity); working Collaboratively and being open to Development (taking responsibility for your own learning and development and encouraging others to do the same). The following actions are examples of achievement so far;

- To help address the under representation of younger people within the service, the directorate has a number of apprentices in post across a wide range of services from administration to vehicle maintenance technicians. The directorate actively works with its partners contractors such as Tarmac to place apprentices many of which whom have successfully secured permanent work placements;
- A number of virtual Team building events have taken place within the business support service facilitated by Learning and Development colleagues that have helped to identify areas for development and in turn tailor training;
- More than 26 Sport and Leisure staff undertaking apprenticeship training. Sport and Leisure are also hosting a care-leaver apprentice;
- Economy and Environment have 73 Apprentices, 36% are between the ages of 16 to 24;
- 45% of Apprentices are from BAME groups.

The split between New recruits and Existing staff is 24% (new) with a range of qualifications including:

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

### **Locality Team**

Locality Managers have worked directly with targeted groups, organisations and individuals to assist them to access education, employment and re-skilling opportunities. During the pandemic, the Team has also supported the Promotion of Business (Covid-19) Grants Scheme. Covid-19 support was made available to employers and the self-employed, including sole traders and limited company directors. Businesses and sole traders would potentially be eligible for loans, tax relief and cash grants, whether their business is open or closed. This information was disseminated by the Locality Team to the local community via the regular emails that the Locality Manager provides to the local community.



## **Prevent**

As part of the wider Council agenda, the Prevent Team will always strive to have a diverse workforce at all levels. The UK Prevent Team, as a whole, is made up of a diverse range of people at all levels and the knowledge, experience and skill of each individual is used for the benefit of all involved when promoting the Prevent Strategy.

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

### **Working in partnership with our employers and contractors to support and enable local people into jobs**

Walsall Works Partner Awards: In recognition of local employers' efforts in helping local residents to improve their skills and move them into employment, Walsall Council's Walsall Works Team awards quality marks to companies that demonstrate social value and their exceptional commitment to support the people and communities of Walsall. These awards depend on the level of activity that each employer have delivered. During 2020, the employers Barhale Construction and Midcounties Co-operative were given Gold Partner status. This is in addition to six companies during 2019. Each of these companies had demonstrated extensive work in the following areas;

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

A further 8 companies secured Silver award standard, namely; 5 Care Services, Apcoa Parking, Go Train, HS2 Ltd, Serco, ValYou Recruitment and Walsall FC Community Programme.

110 companies demonstrated a committed to working with the Council's Walsall Works programme to bring forward further social value activities and commitments to support local people and communities.

### **Social Value**

Walsall Council's Social Value Policy supports delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan. The Council are committed to working collaboratively with Partners and Contractors to improve economic, social and environmental well-being and maximise social value benefits for people and communities in Walsall.

The Walsall Works Team has been instrumental in assessment tenders social value responses and supporting approved contractors to delivery on these contractual commitments.

During 2020, successful social value was drawn from a number of contractors including Highways Maintenance, Starting Point Recruitment, Strategic Transformation Contract - PwC Cloud Navigation, Public Health contracts i.e. Food for Life, Stop Smoking and Falls

Prevention. The Team have also used the principles of the Social Value Charter to support external contractors and developers to draw out social value in major regeneration and development schemes including J10 Motorway (John Sisk), Goscote Regeneration Corridor delivered by Keepmoat and have embarked on early discussions with the Henry Boot Developments on the remediation of the 40 acres Phoenix 10 site.

### **Walsall Works**

An award winning initiative funded by Walsall Council continues to support local people to find jobs, apprenticeships and access training, while also supporting local businesses that are looking to expand and invest in their future workforce. Despite all the challenges during 2020 Walsall Works supported 216 people into employment, 146 into training or further education and 12 into apprenticeships. This further highlights the importance of being in work and having opportunities is important not just financially but also to improving the health and wellbeing of our residents.

### **Black Country Impact Team**

Work with young people aged 16 – 29 who are not in education employment or training on a 1-2-1 basis to remove significant barriers to work and help them get back into training or work. Help them access housing support, training support, application help and other services. Includes specialist provision provided a by key contracted partners to deliver services for ex-offenders, those with health issues including disability and mental health. Specifically targeted are looked after children, children from travelling communities.

### **Locality Team**

Treating people fairly and justly is integral to the Locality Team's work. Regular face-to-face meetings with community is a matter of course for the Team. During the pandemic these meetings have continued, social distancing permitting.

The Team has also engaged in multi-agency action days with Partners. During these days, interpreters have been taken to site visits to enable them to engage with householders and the general public, to enable residents to gain further understanding of their rights and responsibilities. This provides empowerment to the individual.

### **Equalities Function**

As part of our corporate Equality and Diversity function, we oversee Walsall Council's compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty.

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

The Community, Equality and Cohesion Team continues to promote accessible communication by provision of the new community languages, British Sign Language and easy read service, in the framework contract interpretation, translation and transcription and Easy Read (ITTE). Analysis of the Council's interpretation services determines a targeted approach to Walsall's communities.

The Team provides guidance and checks quality of EqlAs that are focused on ensuring that residents and customers with protected characteristics have easy access to our services and

are treated fairly. A number of service areas, including Community Safety, Clean and Green and Money, Home, Jobs continue to benefit from a series of leaflets in 11 different languages aimed at people who are New to Walsall. Further dissemination of information about accessing Council services was achieved through Twitter and Facebook accounts of New to Walsall, which eventually became the Walsall For All accounts.

### **Community Safety Team**

The natural working practice for the Victims of Crime Officer is to work across agencies and with all, regardless of difference, to tackle the issues inherent with being a victim of crime. Regular face to face meetings take place with community members and the Team also is involved in multi-agency action days with Partners.

In order to ensure that services are provided equally and fairly, interpreters have been taken to site visits to enable them to engage with householders and the general public whose first language is not English. The Team will also enable residents to gain further understanding of their rights and responsibilities, which, in turn, will enable empowerment of the individual.

The Community Safety Team is currently developing a responsive programme for victims of violent crime. This initiative includes hate crime and domestic abuse, which will enable clients to assess their specific personal security needs and provide meaningful solutions.

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

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

The Big Lottery Fund supports the aspirations of people who want to make life better for their communities across the UK. The Big Lottery Fund is responsible for giving out 40% of the money raised by the National Lottery and invests over £650 million a year in projects big and small in health, education, environment and charitable purposes. Since June 2004, the Big Lottery Fund has awarded over £8 billion to projects that change the lives of millions of people. Every year the Big Lottery Fund funds 13,000 small local projects tackling big social problems like poor mental health and homelessness. Since the National Lottery began in 1994, £34 billion has been raised and more than 450,000 grants awarded.

### **Black Country Impact**

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

Access to trusted advice and support, working alongside partners including housing, health, transport and employers to ensure individuals have the best possible opportunity to overcome the range of barriers they face, and to ensure they effectively participate, achieve a positive outcome and remain engaged.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Stitchers and Skivers is a monthly craft club at Walsall Leather Museum designed to support social interaction – for example, one person has lived with a chronic illness for 20 years that had led to some mental health issues, and is noticeably growing in confidence with each session with likeminded people. Another was booked into the Stitchers to attend by her daughter specifically to decrease her risk of social isolation following a bereavement. The Leather Museum this year introduced an anti-bullying activity for young people –making a leather heart, which the children may augment by putting a message inside.

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

## **Case Studies**

### **Walsall Works Case Study - Stefania P**

Stefania was referred to Walsall Works Employment Advisor Vicky Welsh by the Job Centre on 26<sup>th</sup> May 2020 for support enhancing her existing CV and for help finding a job. Up until March 20, Stefania had been working as a Quality Inspector, however due to the impact of Covid-19, her employers made her redundant. Stefania was anxious to get back into work as quickly as possible and was open to work opportunities within Administration, Customer service, Manufacturing and Warehouse, demonstrating her determination to get back into work quickly.

Vicky worked on Stefania's CV and created a personal statement to reflect Stefania's job aspirations and previous experience. Vicky then continued to email all the opportunities that came through to Walsall Works and also did her own independent job search on Stefania's behalf. A few days later a vacancy came through to Walsall Works from Midland Metro Ltd who were recruiting Revenue Customer Service Ambassadors and looking for people with excellent customer service skills.

Vicky forwarded this to Stefania, who was very interested as the shift start time of 10am would allow her to work around school time. Her expression of interest was passed on through Walsall Works and she was then invited to start a 2 week sector based work academy with Dudley College and completed a courses in Customer Service, IT, First Aid and Mental Health training. On completion of the course, Stefania was then offered an interview with Midland Metro for the Customer Service Ambassador role. This went really well, resulting in her being offered employment and a One Year Fixed Term Contract with Midland Metro starting on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2020.

Stefania's commitment and motivation to finish the course led to a successful outcome, and from the original referral time, it has only taken 10 weeks with the support from Walsall Works to get Stefania back into a permanent job. She is now on a new career path and is very grateful for all the support Vicky her Employment Advisor gave her.

*"Thank you so much for your help without you I wouldn't be starting work!" – Stephania*

### **Walsall Works Case Study – Kiran B**

In July 2019, the Walsall Works Team promoted the opportunity for local Year 11 students to participate a two month work experience placement. The Team were approached by Kiran B a Year 11 Walsall Blue Coat Academy student. The Team welcomed Kiran Bibi to undertake two weeks work experience in the Employment and Skills Team at Walsall Council. At the time, Kiran had recently completed her secondary school education and had an option to return to complete A Levels but she also did have an aspirations of working as an apprentice in a local authority environment. Kiran worked hard during her placement in the Team, which was extended for a further two weeks due to her keen interest and capabilities.

She actively communicated her aspirations to secure employment so the Team set about supporting her to review current vacancies in the authority and with a job application for the role of Administration Apprentice within our Children's Directorate. Within months of completing her work experience, Kiran was offered the Apprentice position, Kiran has excelled in her role at Walsall Council, has progress with her studies through a Level 2 Apprenticeship. Within less than 12 months of being employed, she has accomplished the excellent achievement of being one of only three people from the Council to be nominated for

the National BAME Apprenticeship Awards. Kiran is progressing in her role and has already progressing to a Level 3 qualification on completion of her existing apprenticeship standard. *"Thank you and your Team for everything you've done for me, I'm so grateful and would not be where I am today it wasn't for you all"- Kiran Bibi*

### **Walsall Works Case Study - Sharon W**

Sharon arrived at the Bloxwich Library Walsall Works Job Club on the 4th March, 2020, requiring support searching and applying for jobs, due to not having the IT skills to do this independently. She spoke to Employment Advisor Vicky Welsh, who offered to support Sharon on a one to one basis. Sharon had previously been in employment for over 30 years as a Sewing Machinist at a local Protective clothing company, unfortunately, she was made redundant in February when the company closed down.

Ideally, Sharon wished to continue working as a Sewing Machinist as this was something she enjoyed and was skilled in. She continued to attend the Job Club weekly receiving one to one job search support from Vicky, who also supported her with the creation of a CV. Sharon had decided to expand her scope for employment into Health and Social Care and Cleaning, alongside her applications for a Sewing Machinist.

On her second appointment Vicky made her aware of a vacancy being advertised through Walsall Works for a Sewing Machinist vacancy with Whitehouse Cox, an interview was arranged and Sharon did really well, unfortunately, the position was given to someone more experienced in using the type of material required for machining. Not defeated, Sharon continued to apply for jobs with Vicky and saw a job for a Cleaner at Walsall Manor Hospital on the Indeed website.

To make her application stand out Vicky tailored a cover letter to submit alongside her CV, pointing out Sharon's experience in cleaning which she had been doing as a second job alongside her full-time Sewing Machinist one. Whilst, still in the library shortly after submitting her application, Sharon received a telephone call asking her to attend an interview with the agency advertising the cleaner vacancy. In preparation for the interview Vicky supported SW with interview techniques and possible interview questions regarding her knowledge of COSHH and the Colour Coded System of Cleaning, so that she would be fully prepared for any questions on these subjects.

*"With your support I have been successful and will be starting work once my DBS has been in cleared and in place" – Sharon*

With Vicky's support and in the space of a few weeks SW was now back in full-time employment. She started work on the 1st April 2020 and now works full-time at the hospital and is enjoying her new role.

### **Walsall Works Case Study – Beth W**

Beth referred herself to the Employment and Skills Team at Walsall Council due to Covid-19 related employment concerns. Beth had recently graduated and was in search of a position that matched her passions and interests. Beth was provided with in depth support by one of our Employment Advisors and made a number of applications to local employers. Her advisor was sent an exciting vacancy within a local MP office who ideally wanted to attract applicants from the Bloxwich ward areas. The advisor set about supporting her with her application, assessment and interview preparation and in August 2020, Beth achieved employment as a Case Worker for local MP for the Walsall North Constituency, Eddie

Hughes. The MP office has now contacted Walsall Works again to recruit for an Administrative role too.

*“I’m very grateful for the support that I received and would not have heard about the position had it not been for the Walsall Works employment advisor” - Beth*

### **Locality Team**

The Locality Team works closely with a number of statutory services. These include the Police, Walsall Council’s Children’s Service and the Fire Service, amongst others. A key activity is working with schools to identify any vulnerable children and those at risk of not accessing resources and/or services due to factors such as low income or other disadvantaged issues.

The Team has also developed and continued links with Making Connections Walsall. This is a service for the people of Walsall that aims to address loneliness, social isolation and other issues that people may be facing. The role of the Locality Team involves further promoting the service and, where necessary, signposting families and individuals in need of support to an appropriate borough-wide service.

### **Equalities Function**

The Community, Equality and Cohesion service area supports those who are disadvantaged and excluded in a number of ways including the provision of good quality **Interpretation, Translation, Transcription and Easy read (ITTE) service**. This is a commissioned service available to our customers at the point of contact. The quality is measured and analysed and data used for sharing future service provision.

From 1 May 2020, there was a change to Walsall Council’s ITTE service. Following a rigorous procurement process, Word360 was awarded the contract for the provision of ITTE for 2020 – 2023. Under the new contract, Word360 offers a fully managed service and, as the Council’s sole provider, will deliver 100% of the service.

Word360 recognises the value of effective communication with their service users, no matter what form of ITTE is required. Its network of professionals will have the range of skills and abilities to meet the various requirements of our diverse range of clients. ITTE professionals will be assigned based on different criteria, such as whether they might be working within a healthcare environment, legal situation or with informal community groups.

By having one provider, apart from a single point of contact and ease of access, Council employees will have just one singular process to access all services. The data collected across these services resides in one single consistent data set. Information such as this has been particularly valuable in identifying high use areas, top languages and the adoption of new technologies without dilution due to multiple agencies.

The most recent ITTE report, published in May 2020, provided some interesting information. 2019/20 has seen the lowest spend since 2016-17 and, yet, Walsall’s diverse communities continue to grow. Subsequently, we have seen the highest number of requested bookings since the commencement of this service in 2012. A number of factors are suggested to have slowed the growth of spend down, in spite of increased usage. This includes;

- An increase in the number of actual bookings made, but reduction in the cost per booking;

- An increase in the use of telephone interpreting;
- Increased monitoring by Word360.

Work undertaken in our communities has played a significant part in reducing overall costs. The total amount of bookings would have been more significant were it not for some of the excellent initiatives happening in Walsall. This includes;

- An increase in community engagement through the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) funded projects as the Walsall People Project and Walsall for All, which has seen immediate and positive engagement results since its inception;
- In particular, increased delivery of MHCLG funding of ESOL and English language classes in the community settings across Walsall, offering a renewed confidence in the use of English as a primary language. As a result, there is a reduced need to require interpreting and translation services.

### Top requested languages to 2018/19

	Punjabi	Mirpuri	Polish	Urdu	Bengali	Slovak	Romanian
<b>2012/13</b>	336	108	277	316	460	353	
<b>2013/14</b>	391	78	567	313	463	205	
<b>2014/15</b>	287	208	820	215	274	144	
<b>2015/16</b>	288	264	238	211	177	85	
<b>2016/17</b>	178	167	311	250	204	142	
<b>2017/18</b>	253	256	433	312	222	185	244
<b>2018/19</b>	328	136	283	207	247	155	418
<b>2019/20</b>	576	211	626	220	380	155	181

It is interesting to note that the Polish language has again become the most requested language in 2019/20, as it has been in four of the previous six years. There was less call for Romanian, last year's most requested language, whilst Asian languages saw an increase in demand. Hungarian, similarly, saw an increase, with 174 requests this year. Frequency of languages used and requested also vary significantly from locality to locality as some wards, particularly in the South of Walsall, are more densely populated by people from newly settled communities.

Polish being the most requested language is no surprise. Currently, Polish nationals remain the largest UK ethnic minority. Romanian nationals had the largest increase in numbers recorded in 2018/19, which justifies the increase in requests for that language last year. However, Polish nationals outnumber any other EU nationals.

Interestingly, the number of children of Polish heritage born in the UK is in the region of 30,000 each year, according to the Polish embassy. There are approximately 6,000 entries for GCSE Polish each year which makes it the second language after English, exceeding any other modern foreign language or community language exam taken in the UK.

In terms of increased usage of the ITTE service, historically there has been a significant lack of understanding in what people are actually entitled to in terms of their rights. Similarly, nationally, service users have not always been offered interpreting services, resulting in individuals in need of interpreting services relying on family members or friends. The use of ITTE services is now more widely known and accessible. Lately, secured funding from the



Integrated Communities Fund has resulted in the Community, Equality and Cohesion Team working with leading regional and national partners in the delivery of services, including language services, to seldom heard and emerging communities, so having a positive effect on the provision of ITTE in Walsall.

### **Community Safety Team**

The role of the Community Safety Team means that it works extremely closely with statutory services and partners. This will include the Police, Walsall Council Adults and Children's Services, the Fire Service and registered social landlords, among others.

Working with these and other partners will help to identify vulnerable residents and those at risk of not accessing resources and/or services due to any number of factors. This will often include issues such as low income, language barriers, or other disadvantaged issues to ensure that all have access to relevant security advice, information and support.

## Walsall Council Equality and Diversity Information

### Directorate Report December 2020

Directorate	Resources and Transformation
Executive Director	Deborah Hindson
Contact officer	Julie Birch
E-mail	<a href="mailto:Julie.Birch@walsall.gov.uk">Julie.Birch@walsall.gov.uk</a>

### Corporate Equality Objectives

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

We will:-

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

### Equality Act 2012 Protected Characteristics

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

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

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

Title	Purpose	Availability	
		On request	Internet address
Corporate Plan	The Corporate Plan sets out the Council's purpose along with the priorities that we believe will help to reduce inequalities and maximise potential. The timeframe for this plan aligns to the Council's four-year budget plan, which moves the Council through to 2021. It recognises the financial constraints within which we operate, but is ambitious for the Borough and its people.		<a href="https://go.walsall.gov.uk/corporate-plan">https://go.walsall.gov.uk/corporate-plan</a>
Corporate Workforce Strategy 2018-2021 "Proud in Growing Together"	The Strategy recognises that the workforce are the Council's greatest asset and identifies the importance of attracting and retaining a highly talented and diverse workforce. The strategy outlines the Council's vision, priorities, values and behaviours and set's out a number of key actions, including a number related to equality and diversity, in order to support the development of the workforce to ensure that it is fit for the challenges and transformational change that lies ahead.		<a href="https://go.walsall.gov.uk/corporate-plan">https://go.walsall.gov.uk/corporate-plan</a>
Employment Monitoring Report (EMR) is published annually and includes the Council's Gender Pay Gap Report	The EMR provides a statistical overview of the Council's workforce and provides in-depth analysis based on a number of protected characteristics. The report provides data which monitors pay grades, recruitment, employee relations matters, broken down by equality monitoring measures, identifying trends and demographic comparisons to inform future		<a href="https://go.walsall.gov.uk/equality_documents">https://go.walsall.gov.uk/equality_documents</a>

	decision making and support the Council to promote and maintain a diverse workforce.		
Pay Policy Statement (published annually)	The Pay Policy Statement is an annual statement that sets out the Councils policy in relation to pay levels and conditions of service for all employees, in doing so it formalises our equal and consistent approach to a number of pay related decisions ensuring fairness and equality for all recipients.		<a href="https://go.walsall.gov.uk/pay_policy">https://go.walsall.gov.uk/pay_policy</a>
Human Resources manage a portfolio of corporate employment policies, procedures and guidance, of which equalities and diversity are a key aim and focus, in particular some specific policies have at their core the equalities agenda e.g. Job Evaluation and Grading Policy, Dignity at Work Policy.	All employment policies are developed in line with equality and diversity principles and aim to ensure that discrimination of any form against employees with protected characteristics is not tolerated. Policies also include reminders to managers on reasonable adjustments and can be provided in alternative formats where required.		<a href="http://int.walsall.gov.uk/HumanResources/HR_A-Z_Directory_of_HR_policies_and_procedures">http://int.walsall.gov.uk/HumanResources/HR_A-Z_Directory_of_HR_policies_and_procedures</a>
Community Asset Transfer Policy	<p>A Community Asset Transfer (CAT) is the process by which a public body, such as a local Council, transfers ownership or management of a physical asset (such as land or buildings) to a community organisation (such as a community group or charity) at less than market value in order to achieve local social, economic and environmental benefits. For Walsall, the transfer will be in the form of lease for a specified amount of time at less than the market value.</p> <p>Community Asset Transfer is a means of achieving a range of Council objectives to improve the social, economic and</p>		<a href="https://go.walsall.gov.uk/Portals/0/Uploads/Regeneration/Asset%20Management/Updated%20CAT%20policy.pdf?ver=2019-09-30-172546-067">https://go.walsall.gov.uk/Portals/0/Uploads/Regeneration/Asset%20Management/Updated%20CAT%20policy.pdf?ver=2019-09-30-172546-067</a>

	<p>environmental wellbeing of communities. The Council wishes to support local communities to thrive and a consistent and transparent process for Community Asset Transfer will support this aim whilst fostering and maintaining positive relationships with local community organisations.</p>		
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## Part 2 Equality Impact Assessments November 2019 to October 2020

Service	Title	Contact officer name
Legal and Democratic Services	Commercial Team Review	Stuart Portman
Human Resources	Sickness Absence Policy	Rebecca Lloyd
Human Resources	Job Evaluation and Grading Policy and Appeals Policy for NJC/HAY	Tracey Edwards
Human Resources	Probation Policy	Kat Lambert
Human Resources	Social Media Policy	Rebecca Lloyd
Human Resources	Pay Policy Statement 2020/21	Tracey Edwards
Human Resources	Model Pay Policy – 2019	Kerry Smith
Human Resources	Leave and Time Off Policy	Rebecca Lloyd
Human Resources	Unattached Teachers Pay Policy	Tracey Edwards
ICT	Microsoft Licensing Agreement	Sharon Worrall
Money Home Job (MHJ)	Walsall Draft Allocations Policy 2019	Neil Hollyhead
Human Resources	Dignity at Work Policy	Nicola Rickhuss
Human Resources	Disciplinary Policy	Tracey Edwards
Human Resources	Grievance Policy	Nicola Rickhuss
Human Resources	Collective Grievance Policy	Nicola Rickhuss
Human Resources	Disclosure and Barring Service Procedure - Update to previous EqIA	Nicola Rickhuss
Human Resources	Clear Desk and Screen Policy - Update to previous EqIA	Nicola Rickhuss
Human Resources	Fixed-term and temporary contracts procedure	Nicola Rickhuss
Human Resources	Right to Request Flexible Working Procedure - Update to previous EqIA	Nicola Rickhuss
Human Resources	Appeal Policy	Tracey Edwards
Human Resources	Whistleblowing Policy	Tracey Edwards

## Part 3 Equality and Diversity Objectives

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

**Assurance Team (Statutory, Corporate and Local Government Ombudsman Complaints, Information Rights (including Subject Access Requests), Freedom of Information (FOI) and Environmental Information Regulation (EIR) requests, Corporate Plan and Performance.**

The work of the Assurance Team focusses on enabling everyone to have a voice and/or to access the information they require as allowed by legislation. The role is to make the function as accessible as possible and to assist, so far as reasonably possible, all customers, such as via face- to-face, telephone or web access to the service. The role involves an element of advocating for the complainant/requester to ensure the Council fulfils its statutory responsibilities.

This informs the selection of the most appropriate form of communication and making reasonable adjustments to the way the service is delivered to provide equality of access. This involves providing responses in alternative formats as requested and, if required, ensuring customers receive additional support as responses are issued which involves working closely with colleagues in social care.

#### **Corporate Landlord Service**

The Corporate Landlord Service provides services which enable the Council's front line operational Teams to deliver on their services and statutory duty to the people of Walsall. The service consists of Hard and Soft Facilities Management, Capital Projects, Asset Management and Moves and Relocation. Working efficiently to deliver the services Corporate Landlord provides ensures that public money is targeted towards where it is most needed.

#### **Hard Facilities Management (HFM)**

To aid inclusion HFM instils current Equality Act requirements in any new works and refurbishments. An example of this is the refurbished reception area within Ilmington House, Darlaston Children's Centre. Ilmington House is to become one of the four new locality buildings throughout the borough, all four of the locality sites will be designed and installed in compliance with the current Equality Act regulations and building bulletins. When scoping works for any Council site, consultation with the service area takes place to ensure that all elements of the work are compliant but also meet the needs of the users including any special requirements or reasonable adjustments, and inclusive to both staff and visitors.

HFM has provided vital services to our staff and service users throughout the Covid-19 pandemic;

- Providing a consistent and reliable on-site presence within our corporate buildings;
- Curatorial and porter services have been present on site throughout to manage entry, exit and replenishment of consumables;
- Additional screens supplied for building reception areas for protection of staff
- One way systems implemented to assist staff safety;
- desk clearance and identification to enable thorough cleaning of our workspaces;
- Supply of wipes and gels.

### **Capital Projects (CP)**

The Capital Projects Team provides a wide variety of major construction services. Client's needs are investigated to understand the nature of the development and needs of service users, staff and members of the public, to design in accessibility and remove exclusion. CP are experts in disability access and compliance through to specialist requirements such as educational establishments; ranging from main stream schools, special educational needs and facilities for pupils who are excluded from mainstream education for a range of reasons, all complying with Department of Education building bulletins; a recent project being the expansion of Oakwood School into a temporary building, ensuring the requirements of all pupil's needs are met and compliant.

CP also works with Community Associations and provide support on applications for Lottery funding, helping to maximise access to services they provide to their communities.

### **Soft Facilities Management (SFM)**

Soft Facilities Management provides cleaning services to schools, Council buildings, and some community buildings, caretaker services, couriers, catering and schools crossing patrols and events. They are instrumental to the smooth running of Council operations. SFM has been and still is a vital service throughout the ongoing Covid -19 pandemic.

SFM has ensured that schools and civic premises remained open throughout the pandemic, frontline employees have worked continually since March 2019 to ensure service delivery.

- Caretakers have supported Community Food bank deliveries and collection of PPE from NEC Birmingham;
- Postal Services have delivered ICT equipment across the borough and opened and scanned post to relevant Teams;
- Catering have ensured school meals, packed lunches and emergency food parcels have been produced with the catering driver Team supporting deliveries;
- Cleaners have ensured the cleanliness of our premises to ensure they remain safe to open. Duty cleaners have also been placed in all schools;
- Managers have supported Communities, food banks, Covid-19 parcels and the strategic planning of food supplies from suppliers and continual stock of cleaning products and PPE;
- Managers and caretakers are now working with Lateral flow testing and Covid-19 vaccination sites to support set up and delivery.

### **Asset Management**

Asset Management engages with the public in its day-to-day activities and seeks to do so in a way most appropriate to individual needs. The service also deals directly with suppliers, businesses, members of the public, service users, carers and other organisations, as well as communicates and liaises with these via a variety of means, to seek to address demand in a way that best suits an individual's requirements.

### **Moves and Relocation (MR)**

Moves and Relocation works with staff on an individual basis and as well as directorates and services to provide a safe and fit for purpose working environment which meets the needs of a variety of different users, Teams, service users and supports reasonable adjustments for staff and users with individual needs or Access to Work requirements.



MR this year have been instrumental in making and keeping our workplaces safe during the Covid-19 pandemic. This has been achieved by;

- Protecting our staff and service users by finding alternative locations for services, such as expansion of space for Registrars to overcome backlogs of birth registrations due to Government directives to support the initial 'lockdown';
- Finding different ways to operate our business during challenging times to limit disruption of our services to our customers- such as ICT and SFM temporary use of the First Stop Shop;
- Designing building routes and one way systems, signage, site access control and supporting staff to obtain equipment to work safely from home.

### **Legal and Democratic Services**

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

### **Walsall Proud Programme**

The Proud Promises which underpin the Proud Programme recognise that the work we do should (a) improve outcomes and customer experience (b) improve employee satisfaction and engagement and (c) improve service efficiency and performance. The Proud Programme must ensure that the customer is at the heart of the work we do and the services we provide.

Recognising the diverse nature of the Council's service users, all change activity being undertaken will be support through an Equality Impact Assessment where the equality and diversity of customers will be captured and will feed into the design of the future service. This may involve consultation activity where service change impacts a policy, it may also impact the way the service can be provided i.e. moving to introduction of digital interactions via Web.

By designing new services interactions through engagement with customers and design of the customer journey, new processes will ensure that inclusion is designed rather than being an afterthought.

The design of the Council's web site has involved engagement with focus groups of residents and the new design will follow Government Digital Standards which incorporate accessibility standards and be compliant with legislative requirements.

### **ICT (Including Information Governance)**

Any changes to systems and processes requiring capture and process of information which consider GDPR principles and include Privacy by Design to ensure that sensitive personal information is collected only where necessary and will be managed in accordance with the data protection principles.

ICT delivers a number of technology based solutions which offer greater flexibility for residents and also for our employees. As with the Proud programme, any new introduction of technology will be supported by an Equality Impact Assessment to ensure that employees' requirements have been taken into consideration in the design of the future solutions.

### **Black Country Impact Team (BCIT)**

BCIT works with young people aged 16 – 29 who are not in education, employment or training on a 1-2-1 basis to remove significant barriers to work and help them get back into training or work. The Team help them access housing support, training support, application help and other services. Scope of support also includes specialist provision provided a by key contracted partners to deliver services for ex-offenders, those with health issues including disability and mental health. Specifically targeted are looked after children and children from travelling communities. Black Country Impact have recently submitted an application to extend the current programme until July 2023 which will also allow us to support young people affiliated with gangs or at risk of becoming a gang member.

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

### **Human Resources (HR)**

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

- A specific equality and diversity pledge (resulting from the 2017 employee survey) "We will strive to build a workforce which is reflective of the community we serve";
- Unconscious bias training (employees and members);
- Expansion of apprenticeship scheme (394 in 2020);
- Introduction of national graduate scheme (reviewed in 2020 and now to introduce local graduate scheme);
- Active engagement with local communities regarding job opportunities and at local jobs fairs;
- Intercultural awareness training;
- Proud Manager leadership development programme (module 7 – Equality and Diversity);
- Mentoring and Coaching opportunities;
- Thrive at work health and wellbeing offer;
- Mental health training for managers;
- Mental health first aiders;
- Talent management system (due 2021);
- Induction and supervision redesign;
- Annual Performance Conversation redesign (reviewed again in 2020);
- Workforce policy development including a review of the Family Friendly Policy and the Recruitment and Selection Policy both with a strong equality and diversity purpose.

Inclusion and equality is promoted through all of our employment policies and these are normally reviewed on a three yearly cycle, see objective 4 for a further breakdown of these. HR continue to manage the Council's Recruitability positive action programme supporting individuals with a disability into employment with the Council. The HR role models this by hosting at least one placement per annum in its own service.

### **Finance**

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

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

### **Assurance Team (Statutory, Corporate and Local Government Ombudsman Complaints, Information Rights (including Subject Access Requests), Freedom of Information (FOI) and Environmental Information Regulation (EIR) requests, Corporate Plan and Performance.**

Through the analysis of data the service can identify potential trends and issues and provide services with this information to assist them in their engagement and empowerment of local communities.

### **Hard Facilities Management (HFM)**

HFM works with community associations to find solutions to enable them to use their facilities for the wider community, for example a kitchen refurbishment to enable the provision of an improved meals service to the elderly community in the area. HFM aim where ever possible to ensure that through maintenance, building facilities remain accessible to all persons, from ramp repairs, toilet facilities and flooring.

### **Capital Projects (CP)**

The Capital Projects Team provides a wide range of technical advice to community associations and voluntary organisations from simple fault diagnosis to design and support as and when alterations are required.

### **Moves and Relocation (MR)**

MR provides support in the identification of premises for the Midland Langar Seva Society. This invaluable community organisation required a base in the area for the storage of goods and office space for volunteers. MR also provides advice to some community organisations on best practice during the Covid -19 pandemic restrictions.

### **Legal and Democratic Services**

Members of the public are able to highlight issues of local concern in several ways. This includes use of the Councils petition scheme, inviting the public to ask a question at a Council or committee meeting or request that an item be considered at a Scrutiny Committee. These processes are used to good effect with issues that affect residents with protected characteristics in Walsall, regularly raised by the public and debated by Councillors.

It is of the utmost importance that the Council's governance arrangements are open, transparent and inclusive to provide a voice for communities to raise matters for debate. In addition, the public can attend all Council meetings unless there are issues of confidentiality. This accessibility is now increased as all public committee meetings are broadcast live on YouTube. Since digital meetings began they have been viewed by thousands of people and

attended by many members of the public who have been supported by interpreters where required.

Holding meetings digitally promotes inclusivity as those, that may not have been able to attend a meeting at the Council House, can now do so digitally. Further to this it is possible to watch back meetings of YouTube with subtitles. It is hoped that the Government will allow hybrid meetings, following the pandemic, which will enable this to continue, which would be a positive and important step for inclusivity.

In addition to the public's access, the Democratic Services Team also assist elected members in tabling motions to Council that deal with issues of inclusion. Examples include;

- The condemnation of hate crimes;
- Ensuring that taxi vehicles designated wheelchair accessible must be equipped with appropriate belts for securing a wheelchair and seat belts for a wheelchair passenger.

We also promote inclusion in managing Council decision making in an open and transparent manner. This includes ensuring all relevant information is contained in reports to enable informed decisions to be made regarding fair delivery services and allocation of resources. In dealing with court cases we ensure that all parties can fully participate in proceedings by liaising with courts and parties to proceedings to ensure that where required interpreters are used in proceedings.

### **Walsall Proud Programme**

There is continued close partnership working with the Council's Equality and Diversity Team, as well as with the specific service areas going through service redesign and transformational change. Each Programme and Project manager coordinating a change project engages with the Equality and Diversity Team to maintain alignment with EqIA proforma and requirements.

There is opportunity for regular and ongoing dialogue about the changes the Council is proposing and how the voice of the customer is captured and used to influence service delivery. Since the Covid-19 pandemic, the Council undertakes Resident's surveys on a regular basis to assess the perception of service delivery and the resident's ability to contact and engage with the Council. This information is being used to inform the Customer Experience Centre ways of working.

### **ICT (Including Information Governance)**

ICT ensures that all IT systems used by the Council services are maintained and available to support service delivery. ICT can provide advice and guidance to services to ensure that their ICT provision caters for an appropriate level of engagement and consultation and that the IT systems and their information can be analysed and reported on to assess the effectiveness of any consultation activity. ICT supports the Council's Corporate Geographical Information System (GIS) and map based information. This is often more valuable than plain text as it enables visual representation of data sets against a background of geographical maps. This can often provide interpretive information about communities or groups of residents visually to better aid consultative activity.

Information Governance ensures that advice and guidance is provided to all services to ensure that information collected and processed by the Council is treated in accordance with GDPR regulations.

### **Black Country Impact Programme**

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

Access to trusted advice and support, working alongside partners including housing, health, transport and employers to ensure individuals have the best possible opportunity to overcome the range of barriers they face, and to ensure they effectively participate, achieve a positive outcome and remain engaged. Public Health has developed specific pathways for ensuring tailored health and wellbeing support is provided. Targeted groups include looked after children, Young people with disabilities, young offenders and children from travelling communities and more recently supporting young people who are affiliated with gangs or at risk of being a gang member.

### **External Funding Team**

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

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

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

The Council have successfully delivered the Community Grants Programme, which is part of the ESF Programme, distributing £1.5 million in small grants in the Black Country region between 2016 and 2018 and are currently delivering a new Community Grants programme that will allow us to continue to support community groups until 2023 with a value of £1.5 million.

The programme is designed to assist small charities and not for profit groups to engage with local communities to deliver a range of skills and employment support activities to enable people from the hardest to reach communities, experiencing multiple disadvantages, to make progress towards the labour market. Grants of between £5,000 and £20,000 are available.

The Black Country ESF Community Grants programme aims to engage with local community groups and organisations to deliver a range of skills and employment support activities to enable people from the hardest to reach communities, experiencing multiple disadvantages, to make progress towards the labour market. The priority groups to benefit from support include people aged 50 and over, those from ethnic minorities, those with disabilities or health conditions, females and offenders/ex-offenders.

The funding supports any activity, which can help the individual, progress towards employment and improve employability skills such as; taster sessions, informal or non-accredited learning, volunteering and work experience placements, job search assistance and softer skills, confidence building and personal development.

Since April 2019, the project has issued 41 grants to local community and voluntary groups to deliver bespoke employability services to those hardest to reach communities across the Black Country.

Mindful Gifts CIC (Community Interest Company) successfully applied for the grant to deliver the Developing Confidence Project. Over the next six months the project will support long term unemployed individuals back into work. Specialist support is offered to people who have been out of work due to caring responsibilities or to those who face challenges finding work due to a mental health problem or learning disability.

Through years of experience the staff and volunteers at Mindful Gifts recognise that raising confidence is key to helping people re-enter the job market. Utilising their shop in Darlaston, Mindful Gifts will deliver a range of activities that gives the participants experience through volunteering and running activities. Mentors will work alongside learners to help develop the skills and confidence they need.

Specialising in dementia awareness and memory loss support Mindful Gifts is the ideal supportive venue for those nervous about taking a step towards further work or training. The organisation recently received a Queens Award for voluntary service and is recognised for the benefit it brings to the local community.

Founder of Mindful Gifts CIC, Vicki Phipps:

*"We always look at what the volunteers can do, rather than what they can't and make reasonable adjustments to suit everyone's needs. As Mindful Gifts CIC specialises in dementia and the shop is set in the past, our volunteers are able put something unique on their CVs. This includes experience in retail and hospitality. We also give references for job applications. We recommend applying for the Community Fund as the process is very straight forward"*

BME United, Wolverhampton, ran the "Steps to Employment Project" (STEP). Delivered in September last year the aim of the project was to work with a group of long term unemployed local people and identify their training and development needs to get them closer to employment.

Each participant had a full skills audit and worked with a coach throughout the process in order to make the journey to employment sustainable. The project was a great help to participant Anya, unemployed for over six months she went to the BME United Office to enquire about the organisation's services:

*"I was in particular seeking job opportunities and to develop my employment skills the staff introduced me to the **ESF Funded "STEPS TO EMPLOYMENT PROJECT (STEP)"**. I wanted to update my CV and office work skills. The employment advisor/mentor developed a learning plan for my journey and held one to one session with me. I was also invited to attend*

*the group training sessions in developing and improving my soft skills and the advisor continued to build the devised personal plan setting goals, providing information and guidance to assist me with my learning.*

*I was actively applying for jobs and attended several interviews. I successfully obtained a job at The Royal Wolverhampton NHS trust as a Helpline Support. I would like to say a big thank you to BME United and the project staff for really helping and supporting me.”*

During the recent pandemic funding has been able to continue with the majority of projects focusing on remote learning. A great example of this is the “Remote Active Learning Project” run by community organisation DIYYA in Lye, Dudley. Using a combination of socially distanced one to ones and online sessions the project have been able to engage with local women who were feeling isolated due to Covid-19 restrictions

*“We wanted to run a project that would help local people stay connected during the current crisis. We also wanted teach essential ICT and smart phone skills that would improve people’s job and training prospects. The training has covered practical sessions on how to use zoom and social networking apps. The sessions have built participants confidence as well as widening their opportunities.”* Duri Latif, Project Manager, DIYYA

Additionally, the Team have been successful in securing a number of key funding pots to support further work, including:

National Lottery Heritage Fund - £250,000 – to tackle inequalities through heritage. Walsall is one of 13 local authority areas identified in the NLHF’s Strategic Funding Framework as being a priority for activity because of low uptake of applications and deprivation.

Walsall Council’s Corporate Plan highlights the need for regeneration in the borough to tackle the inequalities around health and economic outcomes and build resilient communities. Walsall is proud of its heritage, but the continued need to make savings across Council services has led to a dispersal of heritage and culture knowledge; and inequalities present in the local area place further pressure on Council services.

As a result there is a lack of resource to energise heritage community groups and a lack of focus on the ability of heritage projects to bring about the Council’s strategic aims.

This project will seek to rebuild capacity within the Council and the community to create a heritage sector/service/movement focussed on enabling Walsall’s heritage as the “town of a hundred trades” and home of the leather industry to bring about change to reduce the inequalities in health, wellbeing, environmental and economic indices.

- NLHF Digital Confidence (£12,500) and Cultural Recovery Fund (£37k) to improve visitor experience of the Leather Museum such as capturing video and sound presentations. The project must deliver a wider range of people involved in heritage’ include BAME and disabled groups;
- Supporting Voluntary Sector partners e.g. Walsall Community Network (£100k) National Lottery Community Fund to deliver vital community and befriending support to

Walsall's most vulnerable residents during the pandemic or £30,850 will support The Mind Kind Project to provide Mens and Womens Groups discussing mental health and family issues;

- Supporting ASC with the funding for tablets decreasing isolation (£10k Barhale, West Brom Building Society).

The External funding Team also provides leadership on the Council's climate change action planning –The Action Plan will include actions which are likely to have both positive and potentially negative impacts on equalities issues. These include, but are not limited to, social justice in terms of carbon and climate resilience and fuel poverty. A key strand of developing the Climate Change Action Plan will be to fully assess the potential impacts of the actions and incorporate mitigation measures as necessary.

### **Human Resources**

The learning and development Team provide and promote a portfolio of learning and development opportunities, internally and through externally commissioned providers specifically related to promoting and resolving equality issues, some of this training is provided Council wide, some specifically to those employees working within the ASC sector and some externally, and includes;

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

The Council's Recruitment Team actively engages with local communities regarding the promotion of job opportunities and attend a number of local jobs fairs providing advice and guidance to citizens on applying for jobs with the Council.

As well as engaging with relevant organisations, such as Jobcentreplus, and promoting the Council's recruitability programme, which provides work placement opportunities for individuals with disabilities in order to provide them with valuable experience and help to integrate them in to work, either with the Council or subsequently with other external companies/agencies.



## **Finance**

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

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

#### **Assurance Team (Statutory, Corporate and Local Government Ombudsman Complaints, Information Rights (including Subject Access Requests), Freedom of Information (FOI) and Environmental Information Regulation (EIR) requests, Corporate Plan and Performance.**

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

The Assurance Team adheres to Council policies in its recruitment of staff. The service has participated in Council work experience and placement initiatives such as the Council's Recruitability scheme through which we have nurtured and supported staff with a disability to gain skills, which have led to permanent positions within the Team.

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

#### **Hard Facilities Management (HFM)**

HFM workforce is diverse in terms of religion, culture, disability and gender. The recurrent ethos extends to agency and short term/fixed terms workers.

#### **Capital Projects (CP)**

CP is a small Team of 3 staff members, all differing in ethnicity, culture and religion. The wider structure has many people from different cultures and backgrounds, enhancing the understanding and knowledge a diverse workforce brings to the overall service.

#### **Soft Facilities Management (SFM)**

SFM consists of 850+ employees delivering frontline services; Cleaning, Catering, Caretaking, School Crossing Patrol Wardens, Couriers, Drivers, Postal Service Teams and Events.

- 98.2% of frontline employees are Walsall residents;
- The majority work within walking proximity to home, less than 17% have access to their own vehicle;
- Circa 680 positions are part time;

- Employed in various locations across the borough, many with more than 1 position, many hold other positions in Education, leisure and private companies;
- Over 97% of our cleaners and caterers are female;
- Over 99% of our caretakers are male;
- 503 of our front line are over the age of 50;
- Almost 50% of our part time employees care for a family member, parent, child, grandparent or grandchild.

SFM also employ disabled staff and also support reasonable adjustments and amend staff working schedules and tasks to ensure they can continue to work. Where applicable PEPs are put in place. SFM also offer an interpreter services within the department.

### Legal and Democratic Services

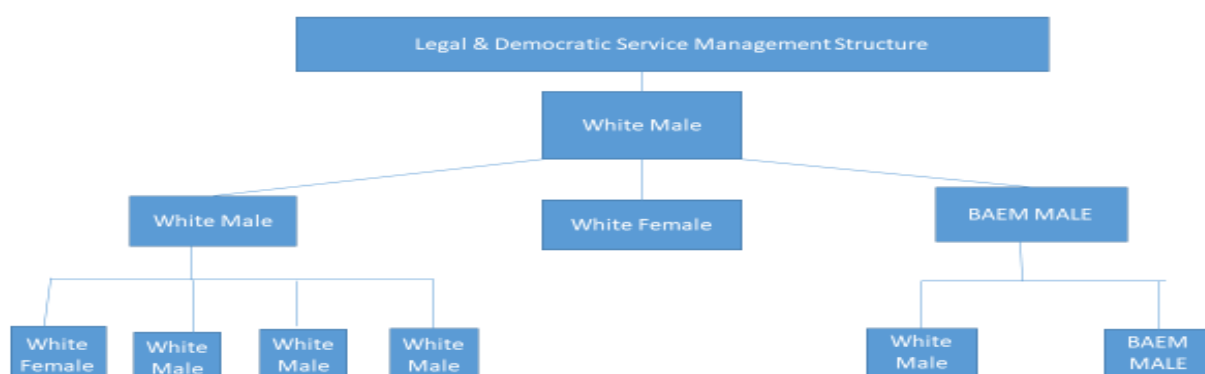
Legal and Democratic Services adheres to all corporate activity and policies as applicable to equality and diversity. All employees have training in accordance with identified need as part of the Annual Performance Conversation process.

In addition, all qualified legal staff are required to undertake annual CPD accredited training. All employees are treated fairly and equally in considering learning and development opportunity. Employees with equal priority or equal need for learning and development will be given the same or equivalent learning opportunities.

The following Equality and Diversity e-learning is available via One Source:

- Equality and Diversity Legislation;
- Introduction to Equality and Diversity

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



Legal & Democratic Service including Elections and administration

White male  
x11

White female  
X 25

BAEM  
Female  
x1

BAEM  
Male  
3x

### **Walsall Proud Programme**

The Proud Programme works closely with the business areas to design and develop the approach to implementing service change and delivery. Through support services such as HR, Finance, Legal and Procurement, workforce change activity is built into the workstreams of the programme, with the Proud PMO staff working together in a collaborative way to ensure that appropriate policies and procedures are complied with.

The three Proud Promises are key to the delivery of the programme;

- Improve Outcomes and Customer Experience;
- Improve Employee Satisfaction and Engagement;
- Improve Service Efficiency and Performance.

### **ICT (including Information Governance)**

Recruitment to ICT including Information Governance complies with the Council recruitment processes and procedures, which include Equality and Diversity.

The ICT service supports and encourages staff to progress and gain recognised qualifications in technical, leadership and project management capability. The service has successfully offered 11 apprenticeship opportunities with a number of employees having now achieved qualifications in areas of business and technical expertise. ICT also participates in initiatives such as the Council's Recruitability scheme through which we have supported employees to further gain skills and expertise and employment.

An awareness of and an ability to ensure that we follow the principles of the Equality Act 2010, when performing our duties, are written into our job specifications and are embedded within the recruitment and selection process. All lead recruiting managers within the service will have attended the in-house recruitment and selection training. The ICT Senior Leadership Team is attending Equally Yours Training in January 2021.

The service actively seeks to develop all employees by regularly offering development opportunities to work in other Teams in ICT, reducing silo working and removing barriers to effective Team working. Reasonable adjustments are considered as part of new start inductions.

ICT supported the Agile Working Policy, refreshed as part of the Covid-19 pandemic, to ensure that all DSE requirements for home working employees were safely provisioned. ICT and the Schools Traded Service use technology to assist some staff and students to work flexibly, e.g. to work from home to suit their individual needs.

ICT responds to requests for IT adjustments for users on a case-by-case basis and work with users and their managers to find solutions such as provision of specialist computers for visual or hearing requirements.

Data Protection Awareness training is designed and monitored by the Information Governance Team. This is mandatory training for all employees on an annual basis. Compliance is required to ensure that the Council is able to share data with NHS colleagues.

The training is provided through a range of medium to ensure that it is compliant – this includes face-to-face training, online, paper based and easy to read versions. The online version of the training also includes audio and visual accessibility.

### **Human Resources**

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

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

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

- All recruitment and selection (R&S) activity must be conducted by at least one person who has received the Council's R&S training which includes a dedicated equalities module;
- The R&S policy advises that the diversity representation of any R&S panel should be given due consideration;
- All R&S activity should be undertaken in accordance with the Council's Equality and Diversity Protocol;
- Job evaluation checks must be performed to confirm fair, equal and consistent grading of all posts prior to recruitment;
- All job adverts must contain an equality and diversity statement and/or appropriate logo;
- Being a disability confident employer and so guaranteeing all applicants who self-declare a disability an interview if they can demonstrate they meet the minimum shortlisting criteria;
- Recruitability placements for individuals who have a disability;
- Safer recruitment practices are promoted through the R&S process helping to safeguarding the young and vulnerable in our communities;

- Promotion of work placements schemes for inexperienced workers/students/citizens
- The R&S policy allows for positive action decisions to be taken to support diversity in the workforce;
- Ensuring equality is a key feature in the suite of HR policies recently developed and the implementation of all of them remind managers of the requirements to offer reasonable adjustments as appropriate.

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

The Council also produces an annual Gender Pay Gap Report which shows the difference between the average earnings of men and women at the council expressed as a percentage. The currently published gender pay gap (based on data as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020) shows a reduced gender pay gap of 5.7% compared with 9.8% the previous year.

In addition to measuring the Council's gender pay gap, an equalities action plan is also developed through CEG and monitored and evaluated in order to identify and address as appropriate any equality issues.

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

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

The Learning and Development Team support manager and employee development around issues of Equality and Diversity by offering a range of classroom and e-learning opportunities;

- Introduction to Equality and Diversity;
- Equality and Diversity legislation;
- Equality and Diversity training;
- Mental Health First Aid;
- Mental Health First Aid for managers;
- DSE assessments;
- Assertiveness and resilience;
- Stress Awareness;
- Unconscious Bias;
- Intercultural Awareness;
- Proud Manager Programme contains with a specific module on equalities and diversity;
- Recruitment and selection training with a specific module on equalities and diversity.

In addition, The Corporate Management Team (CMT) committed itself and all other managers involved in the ongoing service transformation programme to undertake recruitment and equality training in order to refresh learning and best practise.

### **Finance**

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

Employees with equal priority or equal need for learning and development will be given the same or equivalent learning opportunities. Resources will not be allocated on a “first come first served” basis, but will be prioritised against the relative requirements of a range of staff and their work area. Everyone within Finance who possesses a professional qualification must maintain continuous membership of their financial body and must actively participate in continuous professional development.

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

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

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

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

**Assurance Team (Statutory, Corporate and Local Government Ombudsman Complaints, Information Rights (including Subject Access Requests), Freedom of Information (FOI) and Environmental Information Regulation (EIR) requests, Corporate Plan and Performance.**

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

rights of individuals are adhered to. The Council publishes information regarding Individual Rights.

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

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

### **Hard Facilities Management (HFM)**

HFM works with all Council areas and the wider community, to ensure that the service is consistent and fair and that each repair or scheme is prioritised on need or urgency.

HFM currently delivers services through a selection of procured contractors using direct and a selection of local businesses and is currently working through new procurement arrangements and will continue to encourage use of Walsall Apprenticeship schemes to increase the employment statistic for Walsall people.

All the contractors appointed are required to meet a minimum standard of Social values in line with Walsall Council procurement requirements. Suppliers are also encouraged to use local supply chains for materials when delivering works within the Walsall borough.

### **Capital Projects (CP)**

CP works with external agencies, internal clients, contractors, consultants and the public. They maintain an open and clear communication with all partners, foster cooperation and balance with all parties and act as facilitators to achieve the desired output.

### **Soft Facilities Management (SFM)**

- SFM continues to deliver face-to-face training to ensure inclusion for all, as the majority of their workforce has no access to IT systems, smart phones and or internet access;
- All employees receive key annual training initiatives in subjects such as Health and Safety at work, Modern Day Slavery, GDPR, Safeguarding, COSHH and department policies and all office based employees have completed a relevant NVQ in the past 3 years;
- SFM is currently devising a progression training plan within catering to build their future service;
- As part of procuring, services stipulate that potential suppliers declare that they do not meet any of the grounds of exclusion, such as corruption and employment of child labour and other forms of human trafficking;
- SFM shapes procedures to ensure service delivery and take due regard to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities;

- SFM supports good decision making and Team ideas, promote both individual and Team decisions and listen/explore change ideas and recommendations and positively promote empowerment;
- All employees are encouraged to report incidents within the workplace or in interactions with the public or clients. This includes reporting incidents related to racist, homophobic or any other verbal abuse aimed at a person's protected characteristics;
- We continue to demonstrate our commitment to protect staff against any form of abuse, violence, threat, harassment or other forms of unwanted behaviour from any source and cover all reporting methods in annual face to face training;
- We ensure that recruitment processes are inclusive and accessible by;
  - Communicating and promoting vacancies;
  - Offering an interview to disabled people;
  - Anticipating and providing reasonable adjustments as required;
  - Supporting any existing employee who acquires a disability or long-term condition to ensure they are able to stay in work.

SFM understands the importance of ensuring that the Council keeps local people in employment, how this impacts upon Walsall as a borough and how inclusive public services can support and open up people's opportunities.

### **Moves and Relocation (MR)**

MR work with all Council services, supports delivery of many Council programmes and collaborates with internal services both within and outside of the Corporate Landlord Team. MR is heavily involved with the localities programme, bringing together many different Council services to provide suitable locations for delivery for both staff and service users.

### **Legal and Democratic Services**

Equality and Diversity is embedded within our staff training programmes, and management Team meetings which includes a standing item on equality and diversity. Whilst a support service, we have direct contact with external clients and we engage with those clients in the manner that best supports specific needs.

All of the services make reasonable adjustments for clients with protected characteristics from arranging interpreters to assist people in court proceedings to assisting people in attending Council meetings. As a service, we deal directly with suppliers, businesses, members of the public, service users, carers and other organisations. As a result, we communicate and liaise with them via a variety of means, to seek to address demand in a way that best suits the individuals' requirements.

### **Walsall Proud Programme**

Through the recruitment process, we are employing staff to work with the Proud Programme who are cognisant of the importance and impact, which Equality and Diversity has and to ensure that this is maintained at the forefront of the work as it is being designed.

Proud colleagues are advocates for equality and diversity and will support the services undertaking their redesigns to ensure this activity is included in any redesign work. Working collaboratively with a number of strategic partners such as PwC, it is vital that our partners are familiar with our equality and diversity policy and this is shared and discussed with them to ensure alignment. Procurement of goods and services has contractual sections which



require suppliers to confirm their adherence to equality and diversity of their staff and their products and services. This is a criteria which ICT ensures is completed.

### **ICT (Including Information Governance)**

ICT utilises the services of Starting Point on a regular basis to fulfil shortfalls in some customer service and technical aspects of the service delivery. Starting Point are fully aligned to the Council Equality and Diversity arrangements and work effectively with ICT leadership and recruiting management to align to this.

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

The Black Country Impact is made up of five partners, Dudley Council, Sandwell Council, Walsall Council, Wolverhampton Council and Black Country Talent Match (Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council project funded by the Big Lottery Fund). The specific breakdown of funding for the Black Country Impact project is made up of £17 million Youth Employment Initiative funding, £17 million European Social Fund and £17 million of match funding from the five Black Country Partners (which also includes £8 million of match funds from the Big Lottery Fund). This brings the total value of Black Country Impact project to £51 million but a recent application to extend the programme until July 2023 will bring the total value to £65.4 million.

The Programme Management Team at Walsall have recently put together a Social Return on Investment report for the Impact programme. The report showcases the added value to both young people in the borough and some of our front line services.

### **Human Resources**

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

HR actively manages and monitor all of the Contracts it has with third party providers ensuring openness, transparency, trust and collaboration, regular contract monitoring meetings are held with health and wellbeing providers to ensure that the service is the best it can be and to continually improve the service delivery. HR aims for all employment interactions to meet this objective by developing best practice employment policies and providing thorough, fair and consistent advice and comprehensive training to its managers. This year to date the following employment policies have been reviewed:

- Agile Working Policy;
- Facilities and Time Off for Trade Union Duties and Activities Policy;
- Organisational Change Management Policy;
- Pay Policy Statement 2020/21 (Annual);
- Performance and Ill Health Capability Policy;
- Recovery of Overpayment of Salary Policy;
- Recruitment and Selection Policy;
- Redeployment Policy;
- Redundancy Policy;

- Relocation Expenses Policy;
- Retention Payments Policy;
- Smoke Free Policy;
- Unattached Teachers Pay Policy 2020/21 (Annual);
- Leave and Time Off Policy;
- Family Friendly Policy.

There are also a number of further policies and/or guidance that have an Equality and Diversity impact. These include:

- Substance misuse guidance;
- Gender reassignment guidance;
- Domestic abuse guidance;
- Flexi-time scheme;
- Right to request flexible working policy;
- Code of conduct for employees;
- Dignity at work policy;
- Job evaluation and grading policy;
- Appeals policy for NJC/Hay Job Evaluation;
- Disciplinary policy;
- Appeals policy;
- Confidential reporting (whistleblowing) policy;
- Market supplements policy;
- Grievance policy;
- Fixed term and temporary contracts policy;
- Social media policy;
- Alcohol and drugs testing policy;
- Performance and ill health capability;
- Sickness absence policy;
- Annual leave purchase scheme.

In addition to all of the above, this objective is also contributed to through the implementation of the Workforce Strategy, the detail of which has been previously covered in objective 1.

### **Finance**

Equality and Diversity is embedded within our staff training programmes. Equality and Diversity is a standing agenda item on Team meetings. The accountancy and associated Teams are a support service, and therefore customers are generally internal. We attend various portfolio holder meetings / meet with external partners and address queries raised by internal and external parties.

We are available for contact through a number of means (i.e. phone, email, in person) and respond in the required method of communication to address their needs. Financial administration deals directly with suppliers, businesses, members of the public, service users, carers, and other organisations and it communicates and liaises with these via a variety of means, in order to seek to address demand in a way that best suits the individuals' requirements.

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

### **Assurance Team (Statutory, Corporate and Local Government Ombudsman Complaints, Information Rights (including Subject Access Requests), Freedom of Information (FOI) and Environmental Information Regulation (EIR) requests, Corporate Plan and Performance.**

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

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

### **Hard Facilities Management (HFM)**

HFM's procurement of the maintenance contracts requires the social value element to assist in good causes, this includes job creation, apprenticeships, community involvement and personnel work placement. Although these benefits may not always link to a specific individual this benefits the wider community or persons within the Walsall borough.

Appropriate support is offered to staff who need reasonable adjustments. Accessibility is maintained within all corporate buildings for all persons, both staff and public regardless of disability so that there is no disadvantage and inclusivity is maintained.

### **Capital Projects (CP)**

Each contract includes an element of social value, this can take the form of apprentices, local employment and involvement in education at schools and can be financial or labour commitment to local projects. CP supports work experience which provides people of all ages an insight in to an exciting and complex works of design and construction processes encouraging people to be tomorrow's innovators

### **Moves and Relocation (MR)**

MR supports recommendations from Occupational Health and Access to Work and facilitate and support reasonable adjustments in the workplace.

### **Legal and Democratic Services**

Agendas, reports and minutes are accessible through the Committee Management Information System (CMIS), which is available to both internal and external customers through the intranet/Internet. This system is AAA rated. The service also manages an electronic petitions system, which is available to everyone and is again accessible through the Council's internet site. This allows all our residents to scrutinise our decision-making process ensuring openness and transparency.

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

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

#### **Health and Wellbeing Implications**

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

#### **Reducing inequalities**

To further emphasise the legal requirements in the Equality Act 2010 to carry out an EqlA which must be appended to the Cabinet report. EqlAs must be undertaken when the need for a new policy, practice or service development change is identified, or when an existing one is reviewed. In addition, for any proposal where there is an organisational change or there are budgetary implications that may impact on people. Democratic Services officers will provide support to all service areas to ensure that these changes are embedded in reports. In addition, the guidelines will be available in a number of formats for officers.

#### **Walsall Proud Programme**

Digital transformation supports equality and diversity by designing in these requirements at the start of any new process or service design. The voice of the customer is vital in understanding the range of requirements which users of Council services have. This engagement early on in the process, either through focus groups or through formal consultation activity, ensures a quality design which is compliant and which will make digital interaction a positive experience and the interaction of choice for many of our customers.

Whilst not be appropriate for everyone, the ability to channel shift and put automated processes into the digital arena, gives easier and prompt access for those customers who choose to use them, but it also means that where necessary other channels of contact can be maintained for those customers who cannot use online services. By understanding the demographic of the Council's citizen profile and by closely working together within the Council Teams who liaise directly with Walsall businesses, residents and service users we can use information and intelligence to better design our customer interaction.

#### **ICT (including Information Governance)**

As part of the design and procurement of any new technology solutions, ICT will work with service areas to ensure that any procurement is compliant with Equality and Diversity legislation. ICT will support the service area to complete an EQiA so that this is designed in at the start of the process and not an afterthought. The Web site redesign to improve digital service delivery will ensure compliance and follows accessibility criteria and legislation requirements. ICT provides support to services to assist in finding the most appropriate technology solutions to support requirements from Occupational Health and Access to Work recommendations. ICT works with employees and their managers to ensure the equipment is fit for purpose and adapted to individual's requirements.

The Information Governance Team seeks to enable equal access to information rights by providing the opportunity to make requests via a number of methods including telephone, face-to-face, email, Web, paper leaflets. The Team provides practical support to customers who may need assistance to submit requests which are legally required to be submitted in writing. All requests received by telephone, face-to-face, web and email can be supported by

the IG Team who will offer assistance and support to individuals ensuring the requests are completed appropriately.

### **Black Country Impact Team**

The Walsall Impact Team have supported 4149 participants so far of which 96% are from the disadvantaged groups identified, making a real impact in the success of young people in Walsall and across the Black Country. Disadvantaged groups include;

- Teenage parents;
- Ex-offenders;
- Homelessness;
- Ethnicity;
- Educational attainment i.e. those lower than a level 2

### **Human Resources**

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

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

- Ensuring social housing providers are aware of the SPR services on offer to residents. Steps to Work (STW) work in partnership with Walsall-based housing providers;
- Attending and recording the numbers of engagements with local residents via the local Walsall Works job clubs;
- Establishing an Improving Service Excellence group which will drive the social values across the Walsall Borough.

The Council's Recruitment Team actively engages local communities regarding the promotion of job opportunities and attends a number of local jobs fairs, providing advice and guidance to the community. As well as engaging with relevant organisations, such as Jobcentreplus and promoting the Council's recruitability programme, which provides job placement opportunities for those with disabilities, in order to provide them with valuable experience and which helps to integrate them in to work, either with the Council or, subsequently, with other external companies/agencies.

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

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

## **Finance**

The Accountancy and associated Teams are a support service, and, therefore, customers are generally internal. We attend various portfolio holder meetings/meet with external partners and address queries raised by internal and external parties. We are available through a number of means (i.e. phone, email, in person) and respond in the required method of communication to address their needs. Financial administration deals directly with suppliers, businesses, members of the public, service users, carers, and other organisations and communicates and liaises with these via a variety of means, to seek to address demand in a way that best suits the individuals' requirements.

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