

**Council- 09 July 2012**

**State of Walsall Debate**

**Portfolio:** Councillor Bird- Leader of the Council

**Service:** Council Wide

**Wards:** All

**Summary of Report**

Council Procedure Rule 17 provides for a 'State of Walsall' debate to be held at the first ordinary meeting of Council in the Municipal Year. As per this procedure rule, the results of the debate will be:

- i) disseminated as widely as possible within the community and to agencies and organisations in the area; and
- ii) considered by the Leader in proposing the budget and policy framework to the Council for the coming year.

The attached information has been compiled to provide a profile of key issues in the Borough, aligned to the priorities expressed in the Corporate Plan agreed at the Council meeting of 18 April 2011. This is background information to assist and inform the debate at the council meeting.

The information contained in this report is correct as of the time of the paper being published, however more detailed and up-to-date information will continue to be provided throughout the year at <http://www.walsall.gov.uk/observatoryindex>



Paul Sheehan  
Chief Executive

(01922) 65 2006

# STATE OF WALSALL

## Communities and Neighbourhoods

### People

Results from the 2011 Census are due for phased release over the next 18 months starting from mid July 2012 with headline borough population statistics. Whilst we await this update, latest official population estimates give a population for Walsall of 256,898 people. Based on mid year estimates numbers have increased over recent years, reversing a period of decline throughout the 1990s. Population is more heavily concentrated in the centre and west of the borough. Walsall has a culturally mixed population, around 17% come from a black or minority ethnic background of which Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups form the majority. We anticipate this figure to increase to above 20% when 2011 census figures are confirmed. The borough is made up of several individually distinct neighbourhood communities to which people show a strong sense of belonging.

Population projections show that the resident population will continue to increase year on year. Numbers of dependent people will increase and numbers of people of working age will remain fairly static for the next 5 years rising subsequently in number though as an increasingly declining proportion of total population (see figure 1). Walsall's population is ageing and notably the number of 85+ year old is predicted to increase by 40% from an estimated 5,900 in 2012 to 8,300 in 2022 and more than double to 12,500 by 2035.

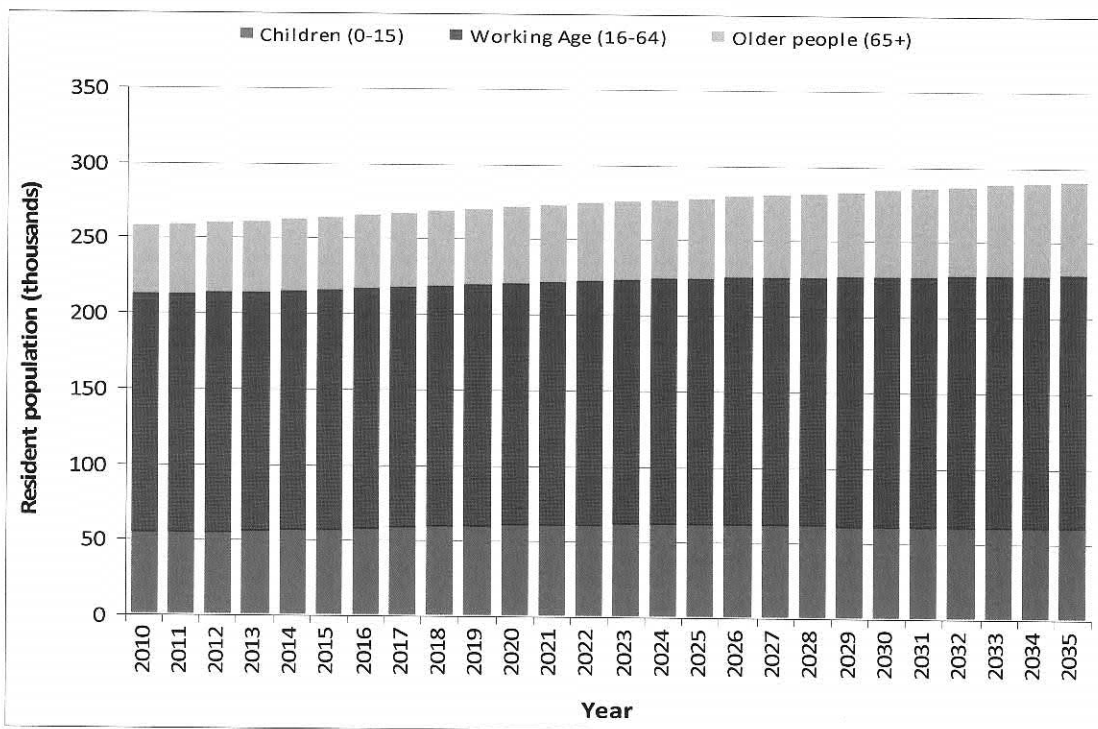


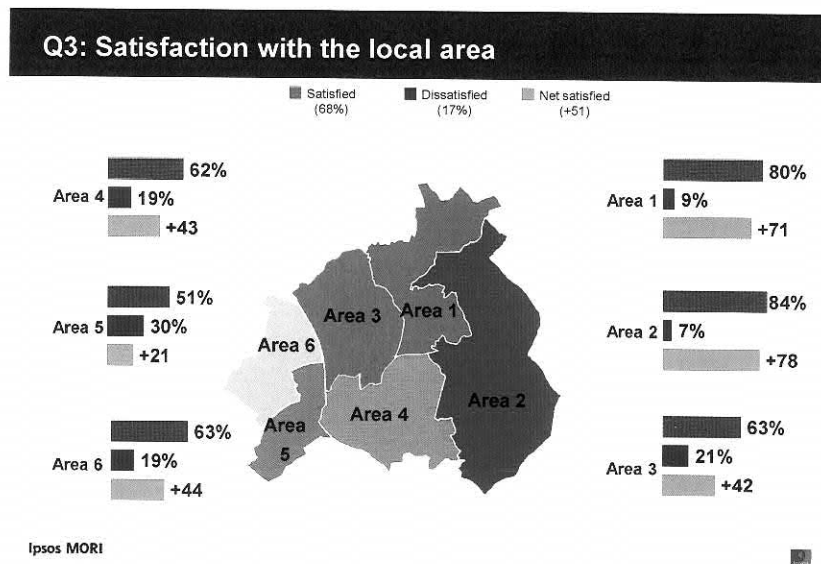
Figure 1: Walsall population projections by broad age group (2010-2035)

Source: 2010-based Sub-national Population Projections, Office for National Statistics

## Perceptions

Whilst detailed analysis from the recently completed borough-wide Your Place, your well-being survey 2012 is still awaited initial headline results indicate notably that satisfaction with the way the council runs things has increased quite significantly from 32% in 2008 to 48% in 2012. This signals an improvement in the council's reputation amongst local people.

The proportion of people who are satisfied with the local area as a place to live remains relatively stable at 68%. This is broadly similar to results from 2008 (71%). However, satisfaction levels continue to differ dramatically from east to west and this will to an extent be explained by levels of deprivation, physical and environmental circumstances, population density and churn.



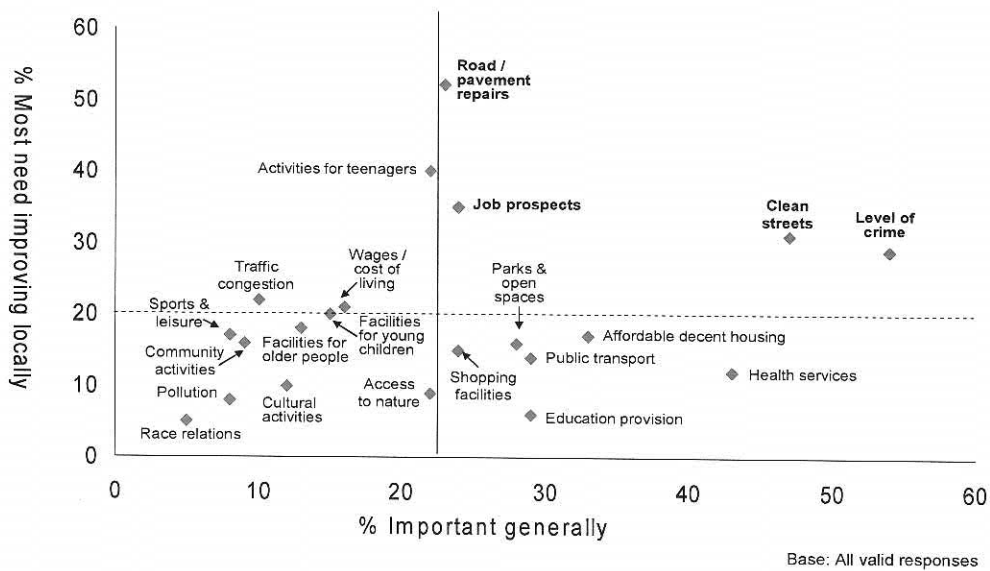
**Figure 2** Neighbourhood satisfaction by Area Partnership  
Source: Your place, your well-being survey 2012

The same survey also indicates residents' views on what things are important to their local quality of life and what things are most in need of improvement. At the overall level, residents identify the level of crime (54%), clean streets (47%), and health services (43%) as their top three *most important* in making somewhere a good place to live. Whilst road and pavement repairs (52%), activities for teenagers (40%) and job prospects (35%) as their top three *most in need of improvement* locally.

Whilst the relative order of residents' priorities for improvement has changed little over time some issues, most likely as a reflection of the current economic climate, have become more salient; so that now 35% of respondents call for better job prospects compared to 25% in 2008, with 21% calling for wages and cost of living improvement now compared to only 11% on 2008.

By charting issues that are seen as importance vs improvement we can see which issues are both highly rated for quality of life and seen to be areas for improvement. Issues appearing in the top left hand quadrant are seen 'above average' as both important to local quality of life and most in need of improvement. Importantly, residents improvement priorities differ demographically and geographically for example Bentley & Darlaston and North Walsall are most concerned about job prospects, as are young people generally, the BME community is less concerned (38%) than White groups (54%) about the state of the roads, but more concerned (28%) about sport and leisure facilities than white groups (15%).

### Developing priorities for improving quality of life 2012



**Figure 3:** (Importance Vs Improvement quadrant chart)

Source: Your place, your well-being survey 2012. Q1 What makes somewhere a good place to live vs What is most in need of improvement.



## Environment

46.2% of all household waste collected is now recycled (2011/12), meaning that 57,977 tonnes (48%) of the boroughs waste went to landfill. The average residual waste per person is now 529kg/person/year. Walsall's recycling rate has decreased slightly caused by a combination of high levels of contamination, seeing the rejection of some recycling material which is then sent to landfill, a reduction in waste arisings, and limited availability of incineration.

Across England, around 40% of waste from households is currently recycled, as of 2011, compared to just 11% in 2000/01.

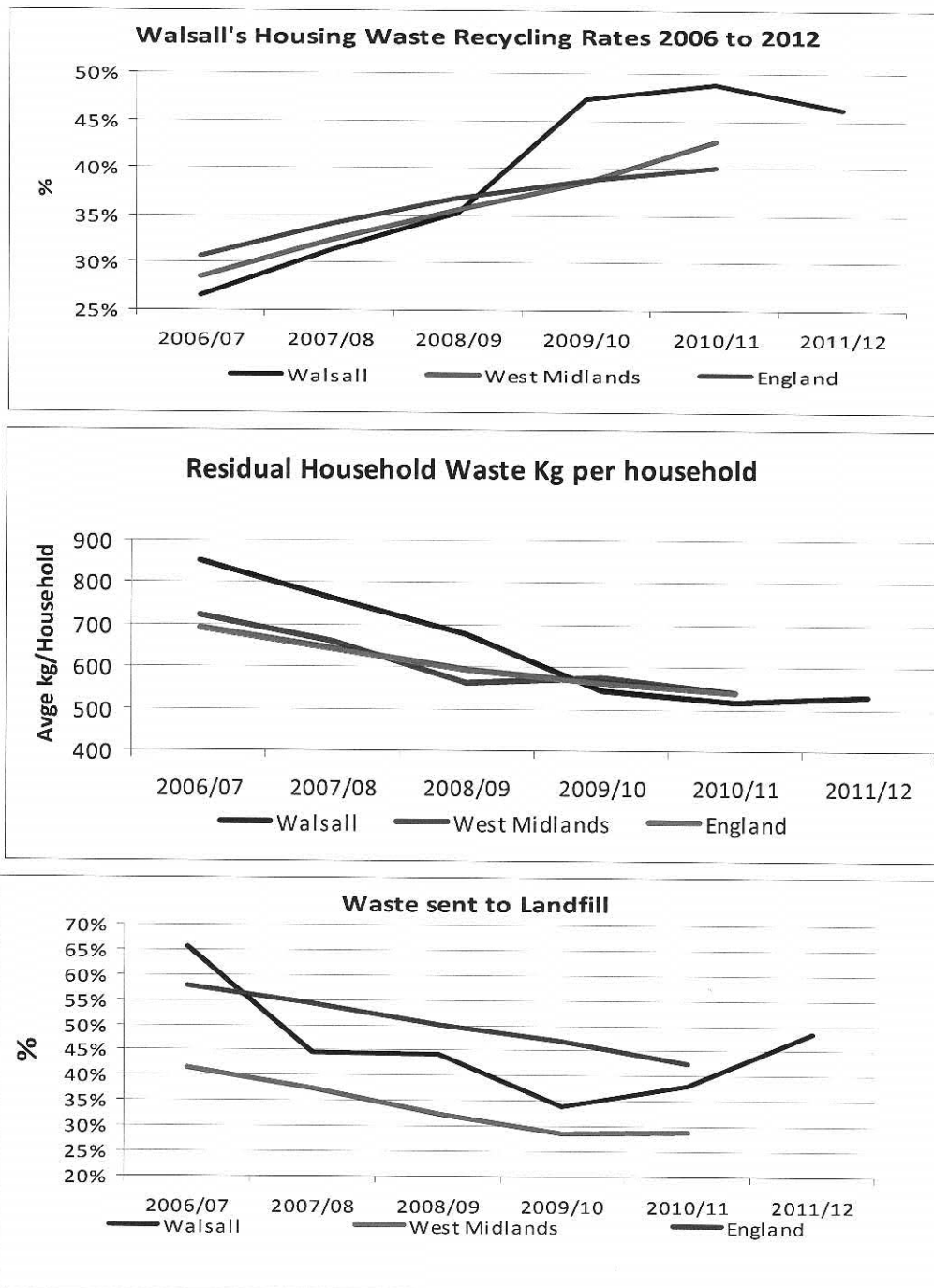
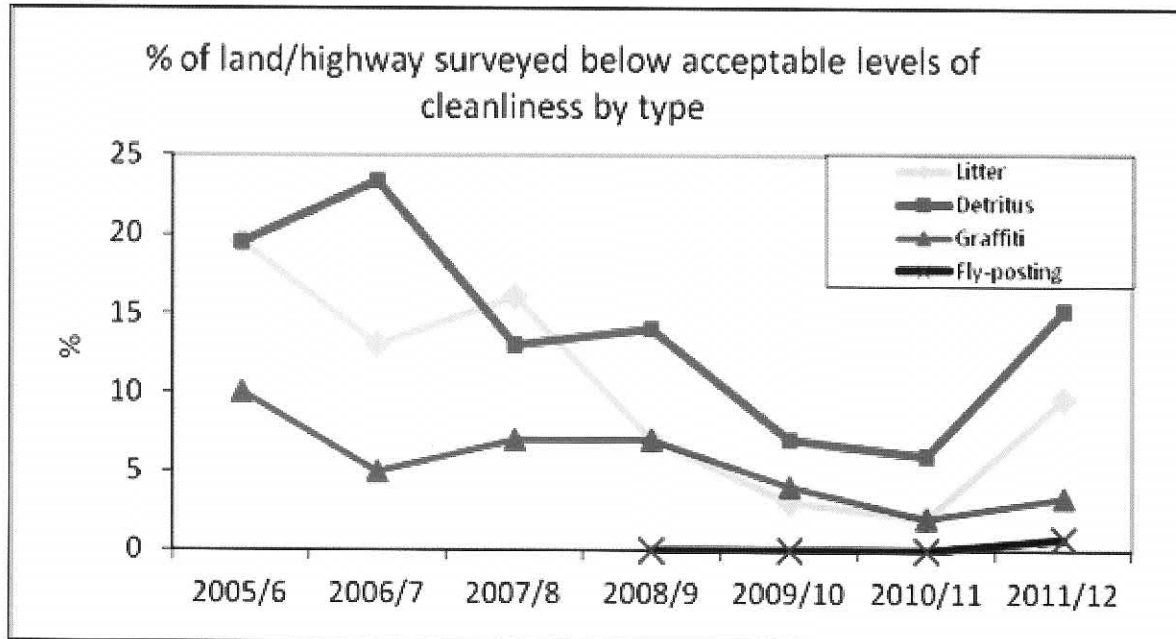


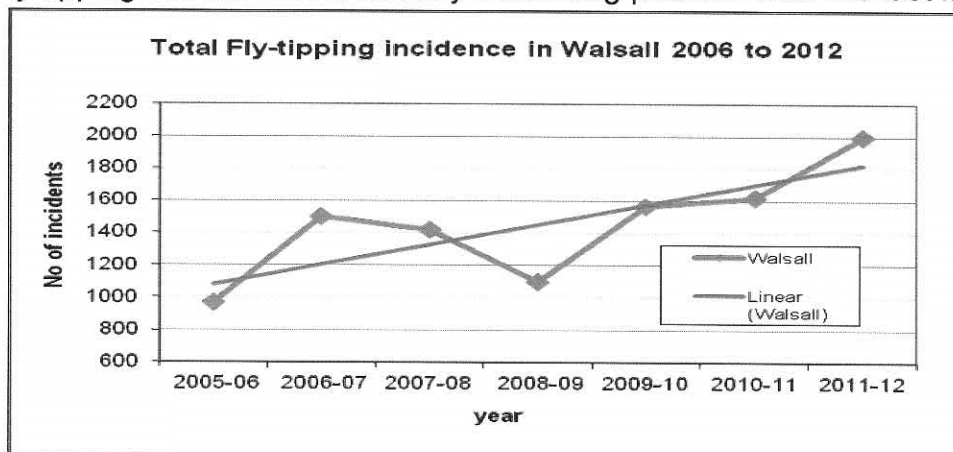
Figure 4a/b/c: Household waste and recycling 2006-2012 Source: <http://www.wastedataflow.org>

The following chart shows trends in cleanliness standards April 2005 – March 2012. The 2011/12 cleanliness survey results show deterioration on cleanliness standards (levels of litter and detritus).



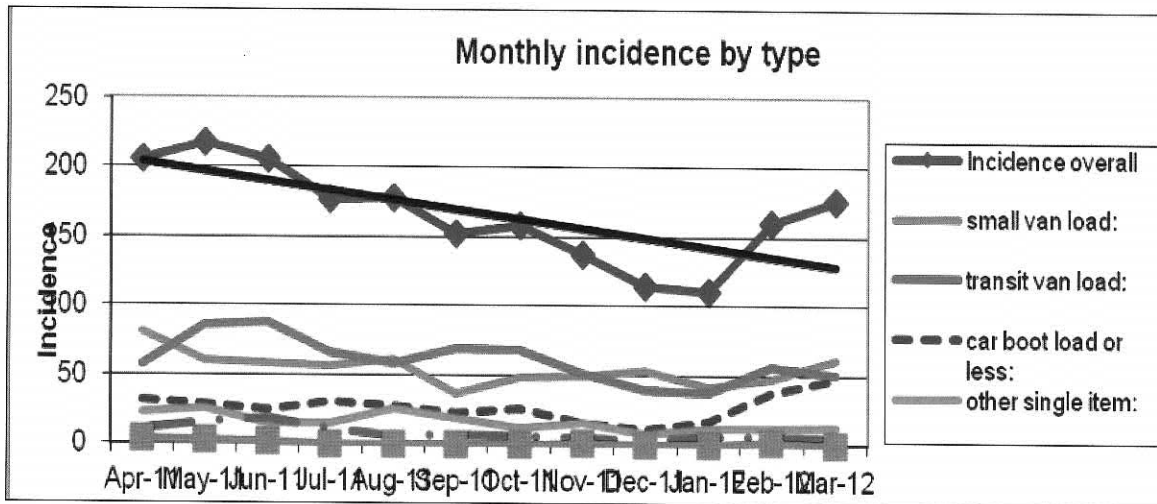
**Figure 5:** Cleanliness Standards  
Source: Streetpride cleanliness inspection survey

In 2011/12 there were 1,994 fly-tipping incidences across the borough, well above the five year average of 1,540 (2007-2012). Fly-tipping is a national issue and during 2010/11 nearly 820,000 fly-tipping incidents were dealt with by local authorities in England, although a 13.5% decrease from 09-10; most fly-tips (63%) consisting of household waste. The annual number of fly-tipping incidents in Walsall has fluctuated but linear trend line shows that fly-tipping has become a steadily increasing problem over the last five years.



**Figure 6:** Fly-tipping in Walsall  
Source: Environment Agency Flycapture database (Local Environment Quality)

More detailed information collected during 2011-12 indicates the types of fly-tipping that the borough experiences and the seasonal variation. A large proportion (69%) of fly-tipping involves van loads of fly-tipped waste as an off load from 'white van' building trades who are avoiding commercial disposal costs. An additional 25% of fly-tipping involved car boot loads and single items which largely consist of household waste.



**Figure 7:** Fly-tipping by type

Source: Environment Agency Flycapture database (Local Environment Quality)

The borough contains a number of statutory and non-statutory conservation sites that are identified for their nature conservation or geological importance. These include sites that are important on a European scale as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) as well as sites that are important on a national scale; Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). In addition there are places of special interest locally such as Local Nature Reserves (LNRs); which provide good public access for people to enjoy local wildlife. These are statutory sites as the important features of these sites are protected by law from development and other damage.

There are also a number of sites of substantive nature conservation value that do not have any statutory status but are recognised for protection through the planning system. Including Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) and Sites of Local Importance for Nature Conservation (SLINCs).

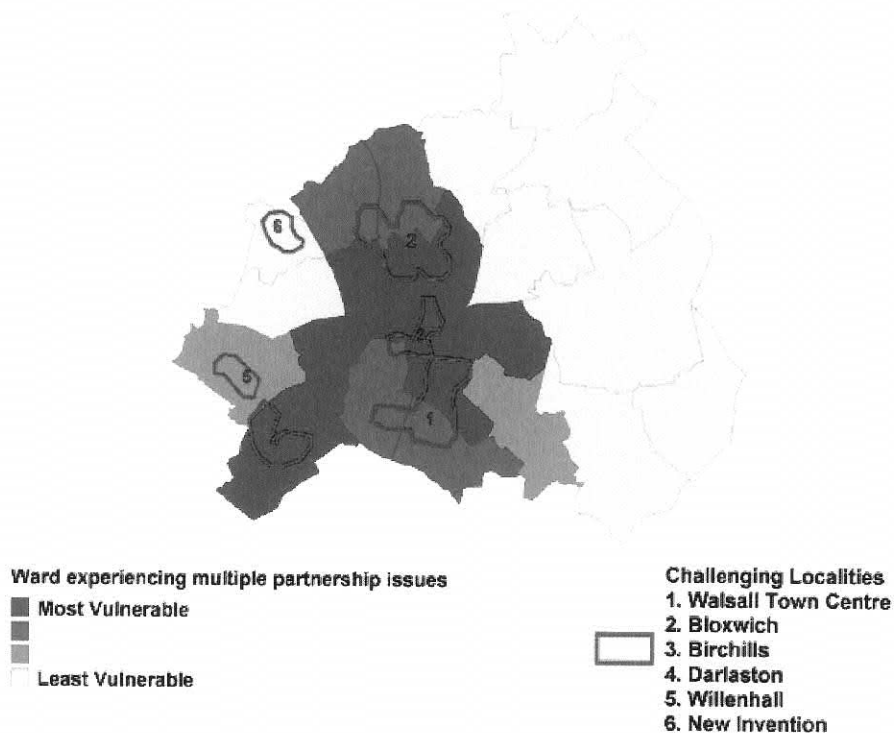
Across Walsall in total there are 127 nature conservation sites in the borough including, 7 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), 1 of which is a also a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), 11 Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), 36 sites of importance for nature conservation (SINCs) and 63 Sites of Local Interest for Nature Conservation (SLINCs), covering 907.7 hectares, of which the vast proportion (627 hectares) are actively managed.

## Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour

A recent refresh of the Safer Partnership Community Safety assessment has concluded that the partnership needs to continue to tackle the six strategic priorities it agreed in the 2011-14 assessment. These are;

- Tackle Violent Crime: specific focus on Domestic Abuse, Town Centre Violence and Serious Youth Violence
- Tackle Anti-social Behaviour
- Address Harm caused by Drugs and Alcohol Misuse
- Community: specific focus on Counter-Terrorism, Community Cohesion and Public Perceptions
- Tackle Serious Acquisitive Crime: specific focus on reducing Domestic Burglary
- Reduce re offending: a cross-cutting theme across all other priorities.

However a recent refresh of the assessment recognises that essentially there are six key areas within the borough which have been identified as most vulnerable areas for community safety issues. Known as priority areas these will be the focus of targeted attention through priority action planning.



**Figure 8:** Challenging and vulnerable localities

Source: Safer Walsall Partnership Strategic Assessment 2012

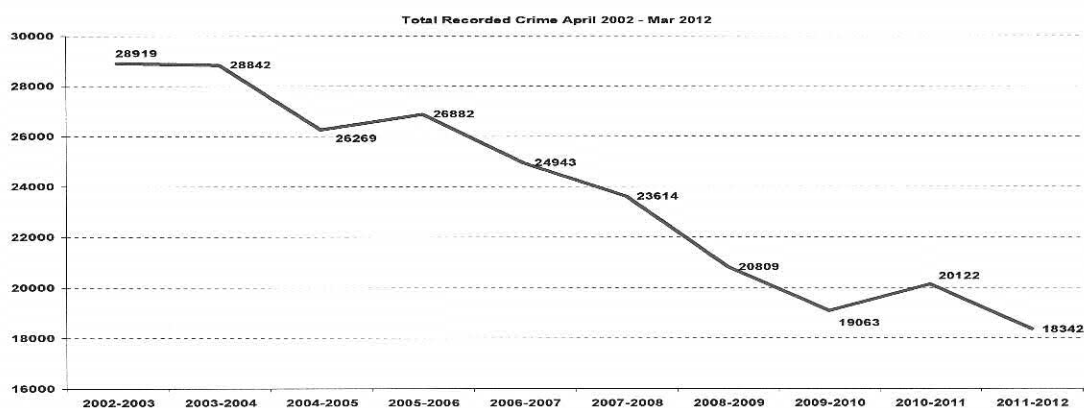
In overall context, levels of total recorded crime (TRC) in Walsall have fallen relatively consistently over the years and the majority of key community safety indicators are controlled as they have either improved or remained relatively stable during recent times.

Following a slight increase during 2010/11 TRC decreased during 2011/12 by 9% compared to the previous year and is at its lowest level within the last 10 year period.

Overall crime remains broadly in line with the West Midlands average and within the average range for other similar local authorities.

<b>Crime Type</b>	<b>2010-2011</b>	<b>2011-2012</b>	<b>% Change</b>
Domestic Burglary	1,634	1,448	-11
Burglary Other Building	1,506	1,525	1
Violent Crime	4,665	4,023	-14
Robbery	478	377	-21
Vehicle Crime	2,513	1,919	-24
theft of vehicle	721	530	-26
theft from vehicle	1,792	1,389	-22
Criminal Damage	3,702	3,347	-10
Drug offences	665	637	-4
<b>Total Recorded Crime</b>	<b>20,122</b>	<b>18,342</b>	<b>-9</b>

**Figure 9:** Crime by Type, annual change.  
Source: WM Police (Iquanta)

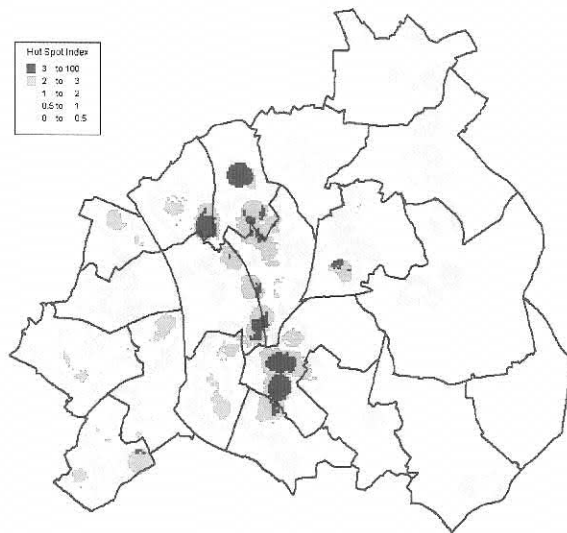


**Figure 10:** Total Recorded Crime 2002-2012  
Source: West Midlands Police

A recently collated picture of all reported antisocial behaviour (asb) incidence sourced from key Walsall Partnership agencies shows that the main areas causing asb challenge in the borough lay predominantly in the central towards western parts of the borough. Approximately 19,499 incidences of asb were reported to these agencies during 2010/12<sup>1</sup> on a wide range of asb issues. Reports of asb remain at high volume, levels of police reported ASB have decreased by 34% from 12,179 (2010/11) to 9,116 (2011/12).

<sup>1</sup> Walsall Police, Environmental Health, Fire, Street Pride, Trading standards, Greenspaces, and key RSL's though not all agencies have been able to supply full year data.

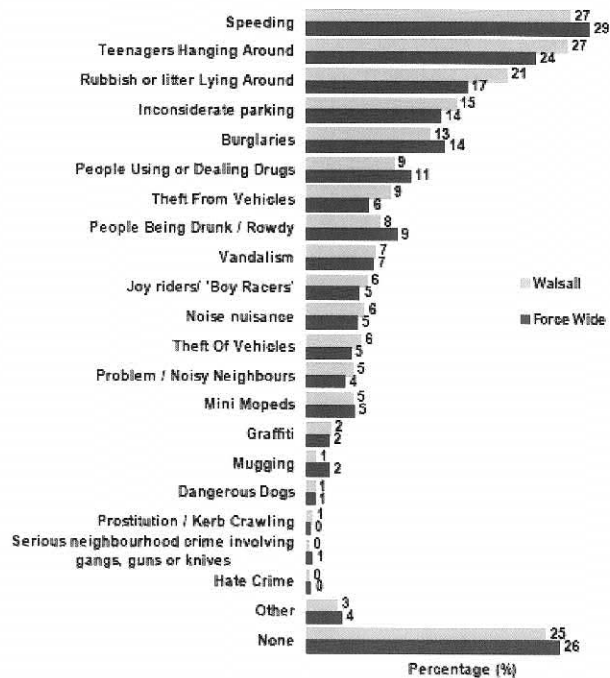
## Anti-social behaviour hotspots across Walsall



**Figure 11:** ASB Hotspots in Walsall from cross Walsall Partnership perspective

Source: All reported ASB incidents from across key Walsall Partnership agencies, as reported through area tasking (approx April 2011-March 2012)

Based on results from the ongoing Feeling the Difference research undertaken by West Midlands Police force; 25% of Walsall respondents say there are no crime or anti social behaviour problems concerning them in their neighbourhood. However, of those that thought issues did exist, speeding (27%), teenagers hanging around (27%) and rubbish and litter lying around (21%) were their top three areas of concern.



**Figure 12:** Biggest anti social behaviour issues in the local neighbourhood

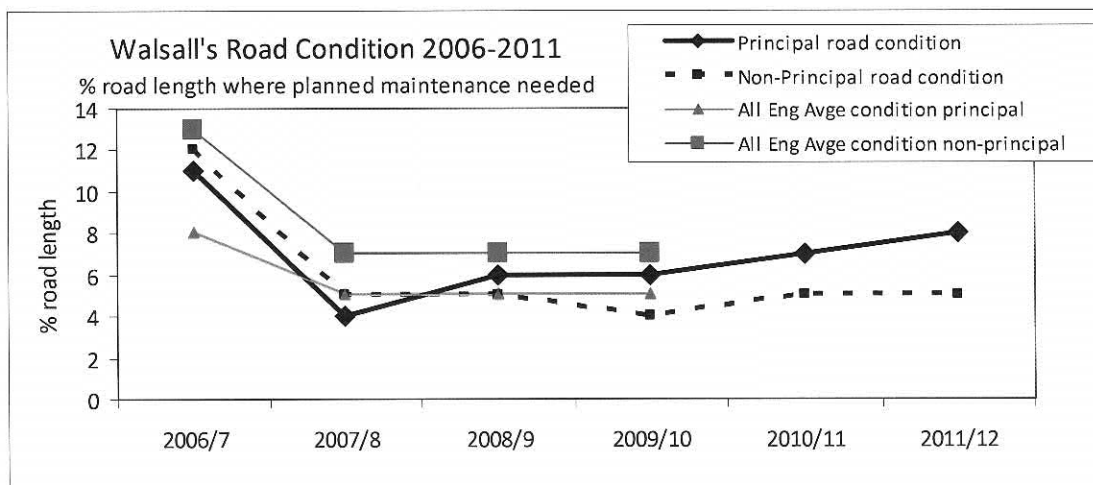
Source: WM Police, Feeling The Difference Survey Nov 2011 – Jan 2012. All wave 31 respondents based on multiple responses.

## Highway network (road condition)

One of the most important of the boroughs assets is its highway network which includes roads and footways, footpaths and public right of ways. The total road length maintained by Walsall is approximately 526 miles (847km), of which 43 miles are classified principal A roads, 25 miles are classified non-principal B roads, and seven miles are classified non-principal C roads.

The condition of the network is important to the boroughs economic, transportation and accessibility needs. Data shows that only 8% of principal roads and 5% of non-principal roads are classed as requiring maintenance (2011/12.), both are slightly higher figures than in 2010/11. Almost 70% of the boroughs principal and non-principal roads are classified as in good condition.

Since 2007/8 Walsall's roads are seen to be in generally good and relatively stable condition compared to the national average. 52% of respondents to the recent 'Your place your wellbeing' survey stated that road and pavement condition was their top issue in need of improvement.



**Figure 13:** Road Condition Indicator Score

Source: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/statistics/releases/road-conditions-in-england-2011>

NB comprehensive national comparator data not available for 2010/11 to 2011/12.

## Road Safety

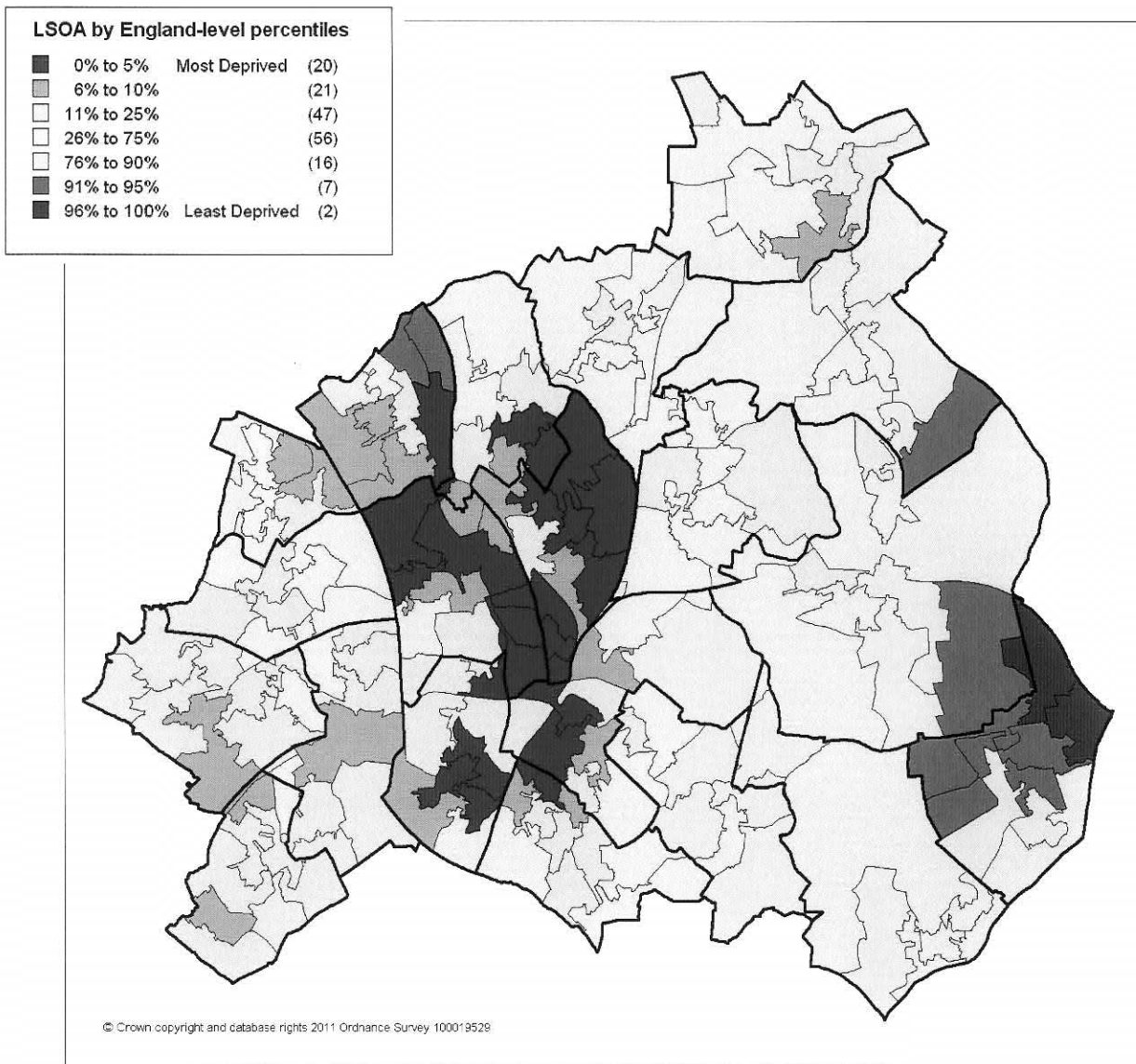
Across the West Midlands Metropolitan Districts in 2011, Walsall had the second lowest level of road casualties with 7.6% (571). However, in 2011 figures showed a rise in the number of serious casualties (62) up from 2010 levels of 60, although there was a reduction in fatalities (2), down from 5 in 2010.



## Economy

### Deprivation

In 2010, Walsall was ranked as the 35<sup>th</sup> most deprived of the 326 Local Authorities in England. This position has worsened since the last data release in 2007, where Walsall ranked 45<sup>th</sup>. The borough fares particularly badly in terms of education, income and employment deprivation. Central and western parts of the borough are typically more deprived than the east. However, while some parts of the borough such as Blakenall are among the most deprived in the country, others rank within the very least deprived.



**Figure 14:** Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2010

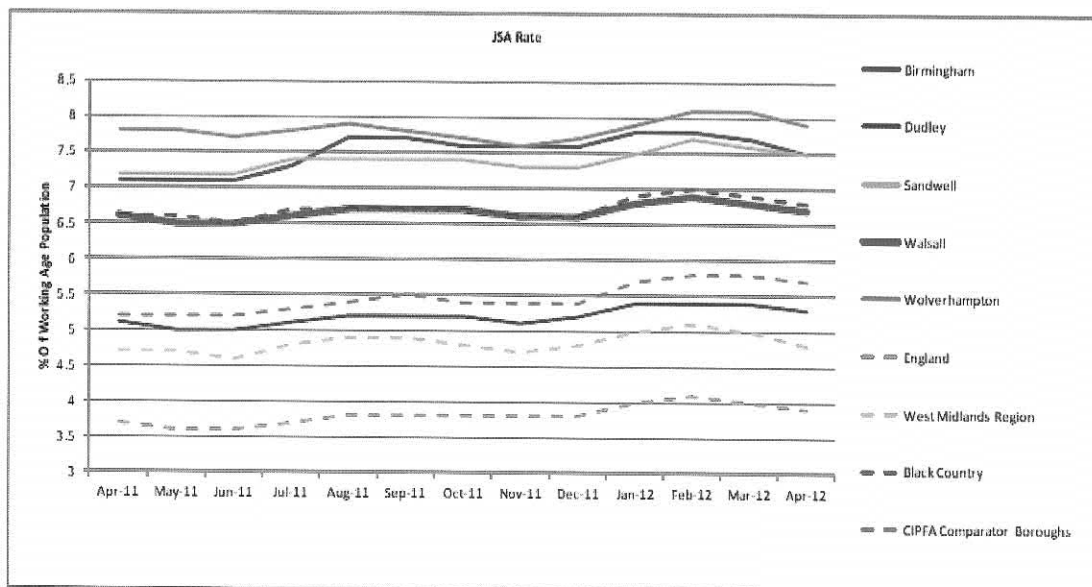
Source: Department of Communities and Local Government

## Employment

Walsall has a resident working age population of 157,900 people aged 16-64. Of these, 27,850 people (17.6%) are not working and are claiming an 'out of work' benefit compared with 13.7% in the West Midlands and 11.9% England. Benefit take up includes,

- 12,850 people claiming Employment Support Allowance (ESA)/Incapacity Benefit (IB);
- 10,250 unemployed people on Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA);
- 3,550 lone parents on Income Support;
- 1,200 others on income-related benefits.

Currently 6.7% of working age people in the Borough claim Jobseeker's Allowance. Claimant counts are rising the most in the wards that already suffer high rates of unemployment. Claimant rates amongst women are increasing at a faster rate than males with some 3,530 young people aged 18-24 were claiming JSA in Walsall. This means that over 15% of 18-24 year olds in the borough are unable to find work, compared with only 8% nationally.

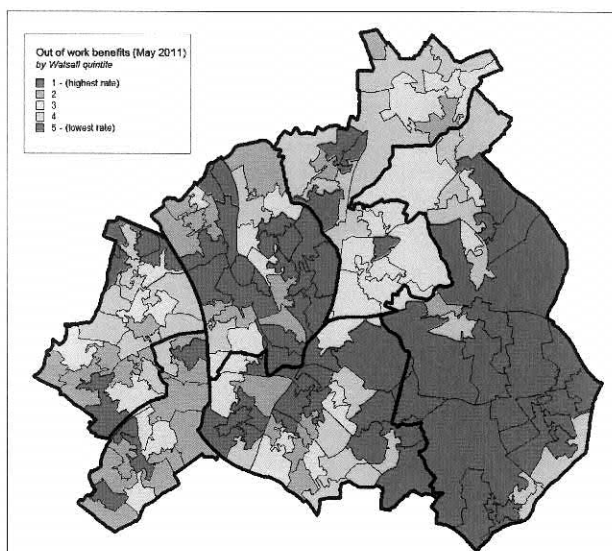


**Figure 15:** Jobseeker's Allowance Claimant Rate, Apr 11 – Apr 12

Source: Office for National Statistics

Although Walsall has seen some improvements in the numbers of people out of work from a high of 18.8% during the recession in 2009, the gap between Walsall and the West Midlands/England remains. The number of jobseekers has seen major fluctuations linked to the state of the wider economy. There was a huge increase in unemployment claimants during the recession, when Walsall fared even worse than England overall and still has not recovered – figures for the borough are currently twice as high as they were at the start of 2005.

High levels of unemployment and worklessness are concentrated in the west of the Borough with Blakenall, Birchills Leamore, Pleck, Darlaston and parts of Bloxwich and Willenhall having the highest concentrations. There are also large differences in the rates of claimants between the west and the east of the borough. Near Walsall town centre, up to 45% of adults in some neighbourhoods are claiming out of work benefits, while in parts of Streetly and Aldridge the figure is below 4%.



**Figure 16:** Out of work benefits (May 2011)

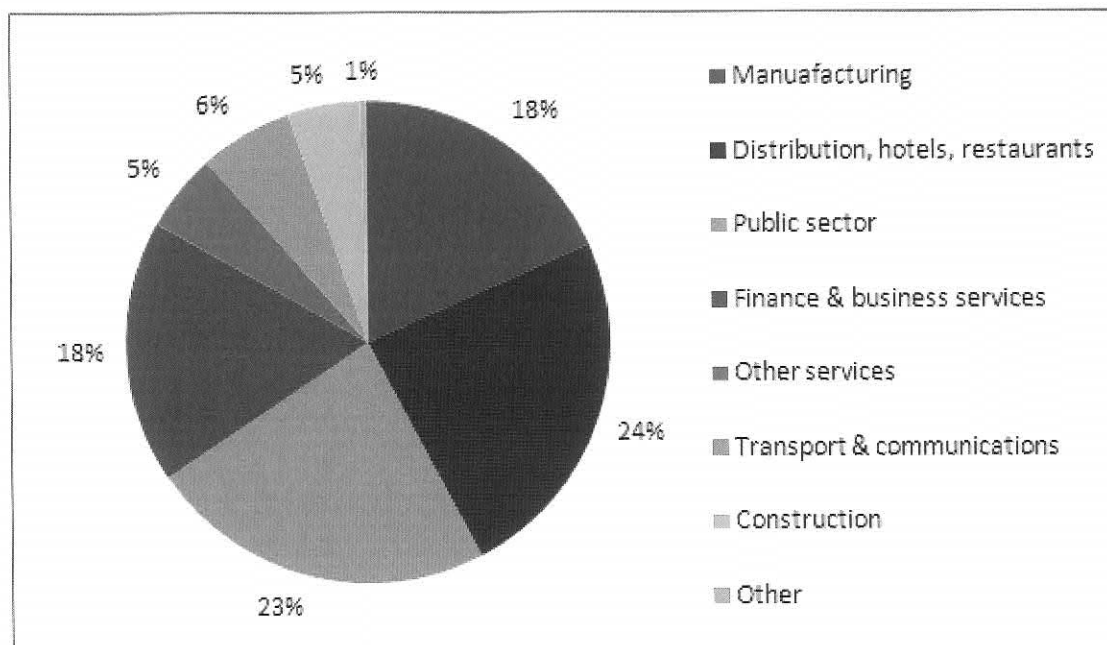
Source: DWP

The government has developed a number of proposals to reform the welfare and benefits system in order to make it easier to understand, less expensive to run and to encourage people into work. The changes will affect people on benefits including, amongst others, Jobseeker’s allowance, Income support, Employment support allowance, Housing benefit and Child tax credits. Inevitably the proposed changes to the welfare and benefits system are likely to have an impact on residents and families in Walsall. For example it is estimated that the cap on household benefits estimated to impact on 300 households in Walsall.

Walsall is home to around 7,200 businesses – a shortage of 2,130 compared with the national average per size of adult population – and this means there are only 0.66 jobs per working age person, compared to 0.78 nationally. During the recent economic downturn the number of businesses in the borough fell as a result of fewer business start-ups and increased failures. This has left Walsall needing a 30% increase on its 7,200 active businesses base just to bring it in line with the national average for an area of its population size. The result is limited employment opportunities for the borough’s working age residents – almost 30,000 of whom now rely on out-of-work benefits to live.

The manufacturing sector remains much more important to the local economy than nationally with its share of total employment almost twice as high as England as a whole.

Walsall remains under-represented in a number of private sector areas including property and other business activities, financial services and hotels and restaurants. Whilst growth in certain sectors has brought the structure of the economy more in line with the national average, the major decline in manufacturing employment has not been fully offset by increases in the service sector, which has led to overall employment decline. Figure 17 shows that distribution, hotels and restaurants, along with the public sector, are key employment sectors – but that manufacturing and finance & business services are also significant.



**Figure 17:** Employment in Walsall by sector, 2008  
*Source: Annual Business Inquiry, Office for National Statistics*

### Enterprise

Walsall was home to over 7,500 active enterprises in 2009 and has a new business registration rate of 35.6 businesses per 10,000 people aged 16 and above. This is lower than comparable data for the West Midlands region (41.7) and England (49.6) and shows Walsall lagging behind in terms of new business creation. In 2009 there were 720 new enterprise ‘births’ but 1,005 enterprise ‘deaths’, giving a net loss of 285 businesses. However, this was the first year that there had also been a net business loss nationally, demonstrating the widespread impacts of the recession.

There have been some improvements in new businesses’ survival rates in the borough over the past five years. However, survival may have been affected by the recession from 2008 onwards and generally remains slightly below the national average. Over nine in ten enterprises survive their first year, but this falls to less than two-thirds surviving for three years and only around half survive for four years.

## Apprenticeships

Walsall currently has 697 16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET). The proportion of young people classed as NEET has fallen every year in the borough from 10.3% in 2005/6 to 7.9% in 2010/11. But despite this achievement, this still remains above the figure for England (6%), the West Midlands (6.2%) and its statistical neighbours (7.1%).

Walsall Council is supporting youth employment in a number of ways; including providing council apprenticeships and implementing 'Walsall Works' a multi-million financial investment aimed at creating the conditions for sustainable employment growth within Walsall based businesses.

There are 87 apprentice placements at the council gaining on the job specific skills alongside training towards recognised qualifications; the majority of these are reablement apprentices working in Social Care with other opportunities ranging from IT assistants, Social Care Worker, early years and office administration apprenticeships.

Whilst the 'Walsall Works' initiative aims to raise the ambition and aspiration of young residents and to unlock new jobs within micro, small and medium sized enterprises with a focus on those opportunities within the growth sectors of:

- Niche and high value Manufacturing & Engineering
- Environmental Technologies
- Financial, Professional and Business Services
- Creative and Digital Services
- Health and Social Care
- Logistics

Employers are offered incentive payments of <£3000 to recruit a young person as an apprentice. The plan is to offer 550 young people the opportunity to access an apprenticeship and obtain learning in transferable skills such as communication, employability, time-management, problem-solving and working with others. In addition we are also offering 190 young people, who do not meet the entry requirements of a full apprenticeship, to access an incentive based pre-apprenticeship course.

## Education and Skills

Walsall is characterised by low skills and low aspiration. Whilst school sector performance is improving, low skills and qualification rates amongst the adult population have been evident for some time in the Borough. This is putting pressure on the local economy through difficulties for employers recruiting suitable employees, limited opportunities of progression for those in employment, and high levels of worklessness. Among the working age population, a fifth (19.5%) of adults living in Walsall have no qualifications, compared with just 15.1% regionally and 11.3% nationally; this equates to 30,600 with no formal



qualifications and 42,000 have not reached level 2 which is the threshold for employability. Some areas of the borough have intense needs for residents whose first language is not English, including the need to support newly arrived migrants in language and citizenship skills.

A comparison of employment and labour supply by qualification level in Walsall shows that there is a balance between the number of jobs requiring skills at a given level from level 2 and above and the number of residents with qualifications at those levels. However there is a substantial imbalance between the number of jobs requiring skills at level 1 and below and the number of residents whose highest qualification is at these levels. There is a significant bias for those residents in learning taking qualifications at level 2 and below. This meets the skills deficit in the Borough but does not support the demand for individuals with skills at level 3 and above, which is a necessary driver for growth. Around 70,000 adults have, or have the equivalent of 5 GCSEs in English at grade D or below (level 1 literacy or below). Around 100,000 adults have, or have the equivalent of, 5 GCSEs in mathematics of below (level 1 numeracy or below).

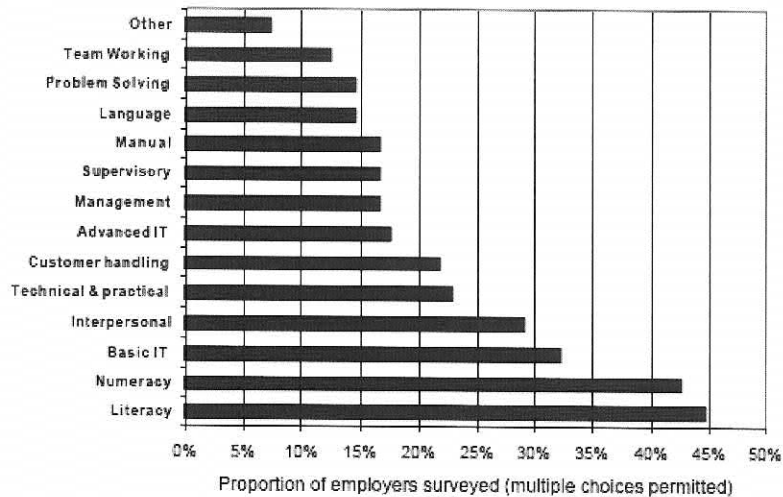
All figures are the number of individuals	Level 4 and above	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1 and below
Employment (100,100)	28,000	26,600	33,400	12,100
Qualifications held by residents aged 16 - 64 (156,500)	27,600	30,100	28,500	70,300*
Average annual enrolments in vocational learning excluding HE (2008/09 to 2010/11)	595	5,159	10,315	2,131
Average annual enrolments in literacy and numeracy (2008/09 to 2010/11)	N/A	30	2,885	7,048

\* 31,300 residents have no qualifications at all

**Figure 18:** A comparison of employment and labour supply by qualification level in Walsall

**Source:** Adult Learning for Life, work and personal development (2012-2015) 'Strengthening Individuals, communities and families in Walsall'

A significant number of local businesses in Walsall have indicated that lack of skills acts as a barrier to recruiting new staff. The top three skills gaps were in literacy, numeracy and basic IT with the fourth being interpersonal and communications skills.



**Figure 19:** Skills gap identified by employers

**Source:** Adult Learning for Life, work and personal development (2012-2015) 'Strengthening Individuals, communities and families in Walsall'

The council has recently undertaken a review of adult learning provision to help fully assess the boroughs adult learning needs, how current learning provision supports Walsall's economic and social regeneration priorities and hence what future priorities need to be addressed.

On average over the three years to 2010/11, annually 24,000 Walsall residents aged 19 and over have enrolled on 38,000 adult learning courses funded by the Skills Funding Agency. This is 12% of the population aged 19+.

Overall the Adult Learning plan includes priority actions to support both economic and social regeneration agendas in Walsall and its vision is to work towards achieving the characteristics of four-age model for Walsall residents.

Age group	Individual characteristics:
19-24	> are independent
	> are able to gain and sustain employment
	> have an appetite for learning through life
	> are capable of personal financial management
25-49	> are able to progress within employment and across employment transitions
	> are prepared for parenthood
	> understand and undertake personal wellbeing
	> are capable of family financial management
50-74	> undertake a healthy and active life
	> make a contribution to the community
	> learn for and within work
	> understand and undertake financial planning for retirement
75 and over	> continue with a healthy and active life
	> have sufficient financial resources for personal wellbeing
	> act as role models in the community
	> encourage those in the younger age groups to develop and progress through lifelong learning

**Figure 20:** Vision for adult learning in Walsall

**Source:** Adult Learning for Life, work and personal development (2012-2015) 'Strengthening Individuals, communities and families in Walsall'



Schools sector education is showing improvement. At Key Stages 4 (GCSE) educational attainment has improved year on year, and 2011 sees Walsall out of the bottom quartile nationally for the first time since 2002. Since 2007 Walsall has improved by over 20 percentage points, which is significantly better than the improvement made by our main comparators over the same period.

Whilst Walsall still remains behind both the West Midlands and National averages the attainment gap is closing. With 56.3% of Walsall children now achieving 5A\*-C (inc English and Maths) in 2011 compared to 58.9% nationally and 57.4% in the West Midlands. Attainment levels are now above our statistical neighbours' average.

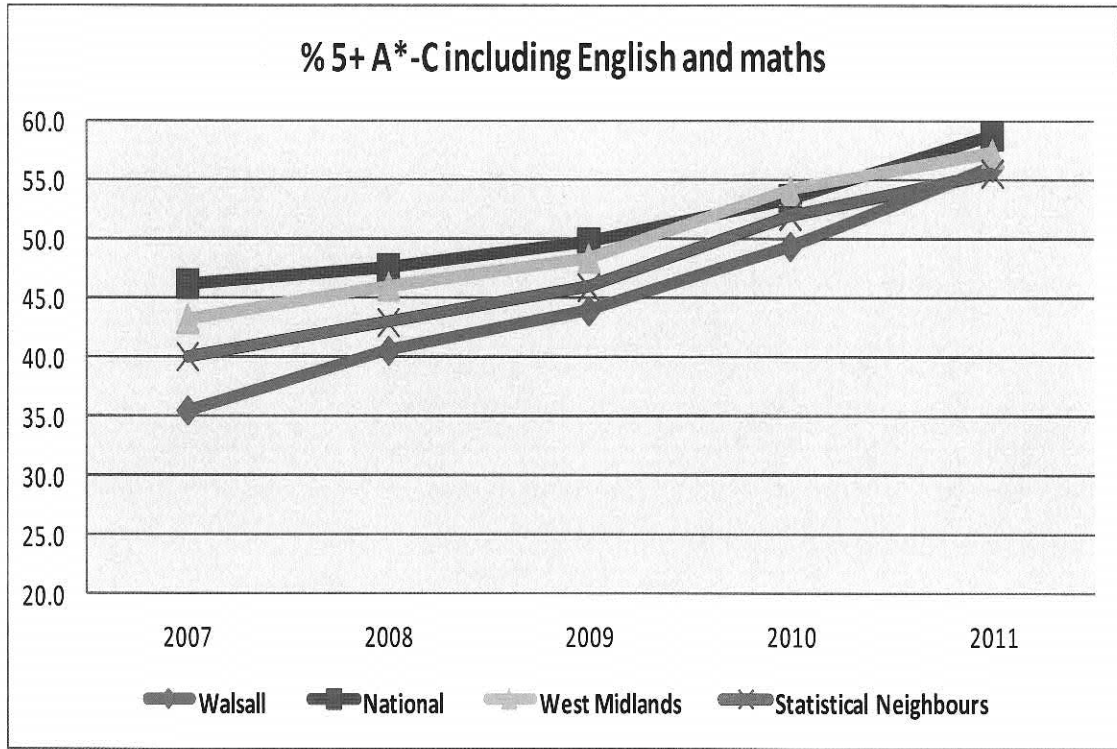
GCSE		ALL PUPILS					
		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Imp 07-11
% 5+ A* - C Inc E & M	Walsall	35.5	40.6	44.0	49.5	56.3	<b>20.8</b>
	National	46.3	47.6	49.8	53.5	58.9	<b>12.6</b>
	West Midlands	43.3	46.1	48.5	54.2	57.4	<b>14.1</b>
	Statistical Neighbours	40.1	43.0	46.0	52.1	55.7	<b>15.6</b>
% 5+ A* - G	Walsall	87.3	90.6	91.8	93.1	94.2	<b>6.9</b>
	National	91.7	91.6	92.3	92.8	93.5	<b>1.8</b>
	West Midlands	91.3	92.5	93.6	94.9	95.5	<b>4.2</b>
	Statistical Neighbours	90.1	91.7	92.5	94.6	94.9	<b>4.8</b>

Walsall KS4 %	2009 Ranking	2010 Ranking	2011 Ranking
5 + A* - C inc Eng and Maths	131	130	103
5 + A* - G	127	130	124

**Figure 21:**a/Xb GCSE Attainment 2011  
Source: LAIT May 2012 and DfE statistical (first release data)

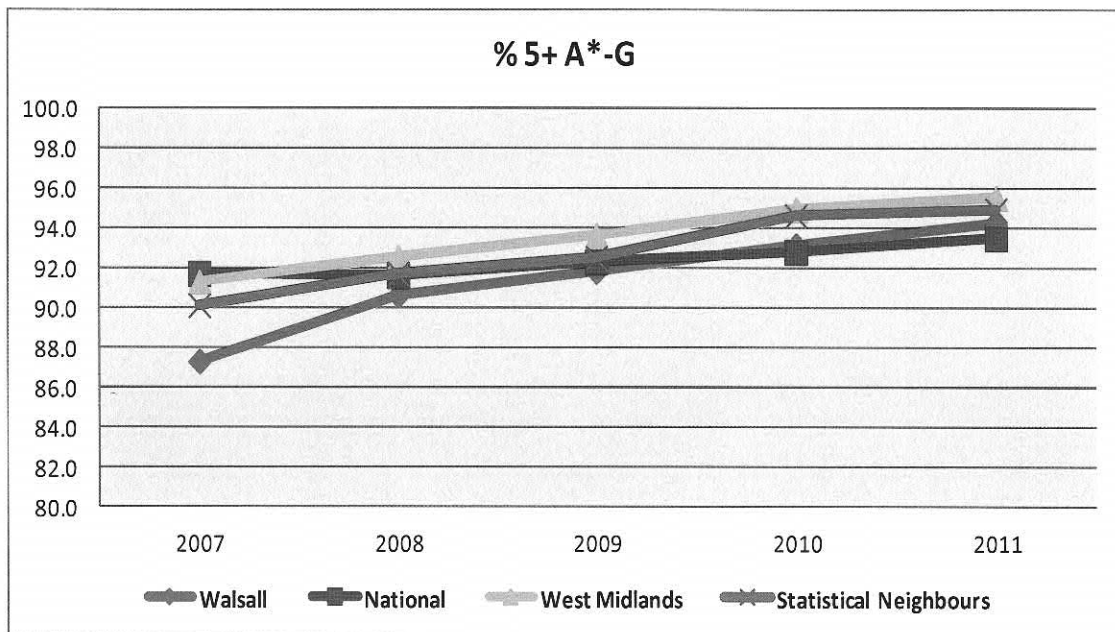
The proportion of young people achieving 5+A\*-C including English and maths has improved by 6.8 percentage points from 49.5% (2010) to 56.3% (2011). This is better than the national rate of improvement of 5.4%. Based on these results Walsall is ranked as the 8th most improved authority in the country. Walsall's overall national ranking has improved by 27 places since 2010, going from 130rd to 103th out of 152 local authorities in the country.



**Figure 22:** GCSE Attainment 2011 (% 5+ A\*-C inc English and Maths)

**Source:** DfE: GCSE and Equivalent Results in England - 2010/11, DfE website: (Table 17) Accessed on 26.1.12

The percentage of pupils attaining 5+A\*-G has also improved by just over one percentage point from 93.1 in 2010 to 94.2% in 2011. Since 2010 results in Walsall have been above national average and the LA ranking has improved in 2011 by a further 6 places.



**Figure 23:** GCSE Attainment 2011 (% 5+ A\*-G inc English and Maths)

**Source:** DfE: GCSE and Equivalent Results in England - 2010/11 (Table 18) (Accessed on 26.1.12)

Post 16 education attainment shows a more mixed picture where the average points score in Walsall has declined from the 2010 results by 27.9 points from 650.5 to 622.6. This is set against the national trend where attainment has improved slightly from 744.8 to 745.9. Walsall's average points score per candidate is now 622.6 with a ranking position of 144<sup>th</sup> out of 152 local authorities in the country. Based on 2011 results Walsall are in bottom quartile.

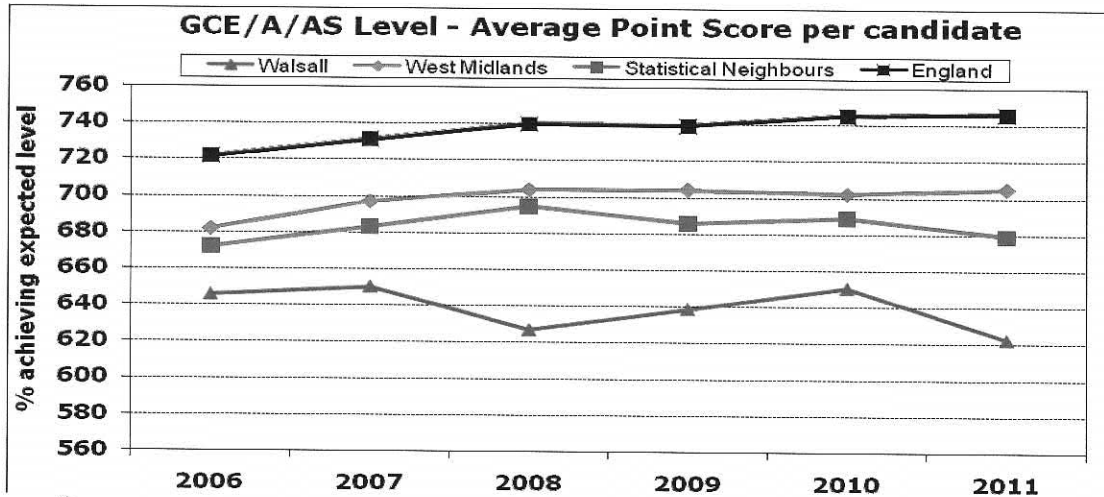


Figure 24: 6<sup>th</sup> form average points score per candidate 2011  
Source: LAIT May 2012 and DfE statistical (first release data)

Walsall College are included in these official statistics and as College results have declined from 489.3 in 2010 to 394.6 in 2011 and because that makes up 42% of the 2011 KS5 cohort any decline in results in this setting has a significant effect on overall borough levels. Excluding college average points score per candidate shows that attainment across remaining school settings has actually improved in 2011 from 738.3 to 754.2.

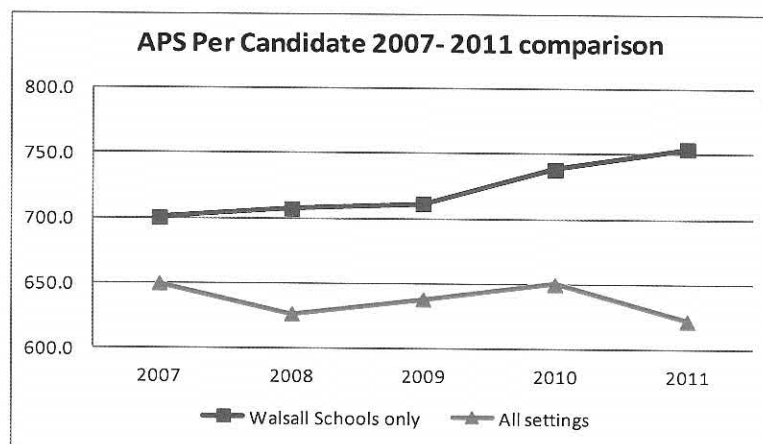


Figure 25: Post-16 educational attainment 2007-2011, Walsall schools setting and all settings  
Source: LAIT May 2012 and DfE statistical (first release data)

## Housing

65% of households in Walsall are living in owner occupied accommodation, 27% rent from a housing association and the remaining 8% rent privately or live rent free. Since 2001 data shows an increase in the private sector (up to 75%) in particular an increase in the private rented sector. Approximately 25% of residents live in social housing, with some areas namely in the west of the borough with rates of social housing nearly 53%.

The Private Sector House Condition Survey in 2008 found an estimated 10,200 dwellings (13%) in Walsall where fuel poverty was present. The private rented sector has, by a substantial margin, the highest rate of fuel poverty at 44% - 2200 dwellings.

As at April 2012 there were 1516 private sector residential properties which were empty for over 6 months. The private sector empty properties are distributed mainly to the west of the borough but also have large clusters of properties in the east. 398 properties have been empty for longer than 2 years and are distributed across the borough.

Land Registry data shows the average house price in Walsall as at April 2012 stood at £105,359 which is reduction of 1.5% compared to the average price of £106,904 in April 2011. House prices in the borough are lower than both the national and regional averages.

The updated housing needs study 2010 estimates that the average annual gross household income (including non-housing benefits) in Walsall is £25,410.

## Fuel Poverty

There continues to be significant investment in improving energy efficiency across all housing sectors in the borough, aimed at reducing CO2 emissions and tackling fuel poverty. During 2011/12, the council assisted a total of 473 owner-occupier households in the private sector improve the energy efficiency of their homes and hence help to reduce their energy costs. This has included a borough wide cavity and loft insulation programme where we completed 381 cases and 61 boiler replacements and external wall insulations.

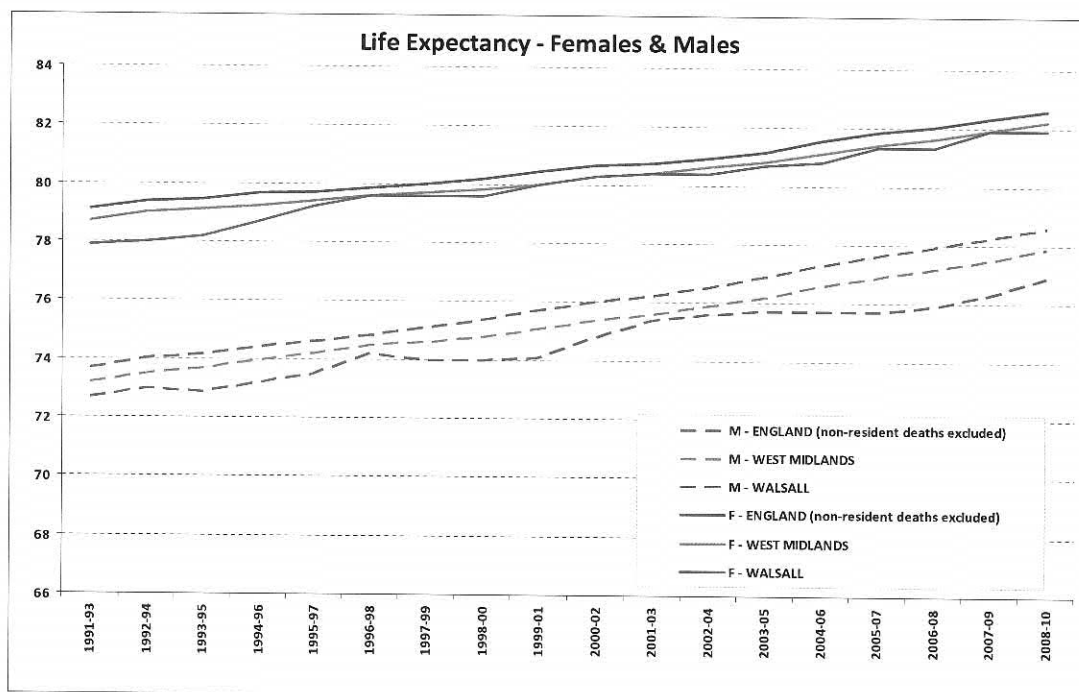
## Health and Well-being

A recently refreshed Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) 2012 identifies the wide ranging health and well-being challenges faced by the borough. The assessment hence sets out the priorities for improvement action that will shape the content of the up coming Health and Well-being Strategy for Walsall. Forthcoming integration of NHS and local authority services presents good opportunities for partnership working.

### Health Inequalities

Walsall's population is ageing but despite this growth in the older population, life expectancy continues to fall short of national averages, particularly in men. Whilst overall life expectancy is gradually increasing for both males and females and that the gap with comparator areas has shown positive signs of narrowing; more and more people are living with ill-health and chronic long-term conditions in later life.

Typically life expectancy is higher in women than men. For women, Walsall is on a par with regional but lower than nationally, however the gap is reducing. In contrast, male life expectancy is considerably lower in Walsall than regional and national figures and the gap appears to be widening.



**Figure 26:** Trends in life expectancy 1991-2009  
Source: JSNA 2012 (ONS, NCHOD)

Healthy life expectancy is an estimate of how many years are lived in good health over the lifespan. It is a good measure of whether ageing populations, including Walsall's, will be vibrant and independent, or suffer from greater chronic ill health and poor quality of life.

Walsall has a slightly lower healthy life expectancy age compared to regional and national comparators.

As a key factor in determining our life expectancy, Walsall's infant mortality rate is persistently higher than regional and national rates and significant inequalities exist across the borough.

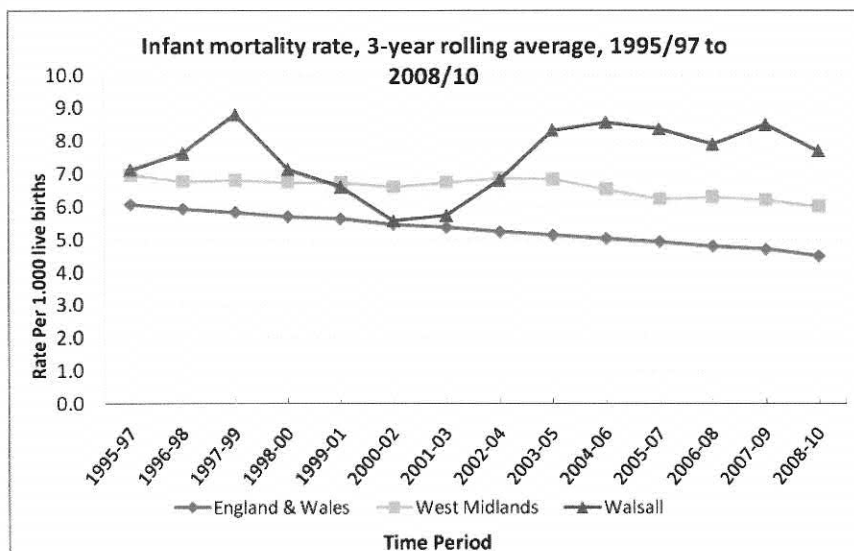
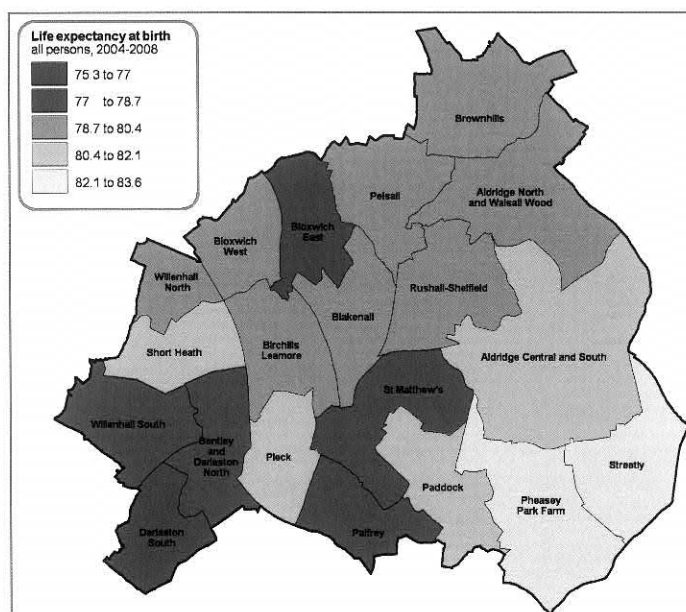


Figure 27: Infant Mortality rates 1995-2010

Source: JSNA 2012

In terms of life expectancy at birth there is a wide discrepancy between different parts of the borough, with people living in the most deprived wards in Walsall dying on average 8 years younger than those in the most affluent.



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Figure 28: Life Expectancy at Birth by Walsall Ward.

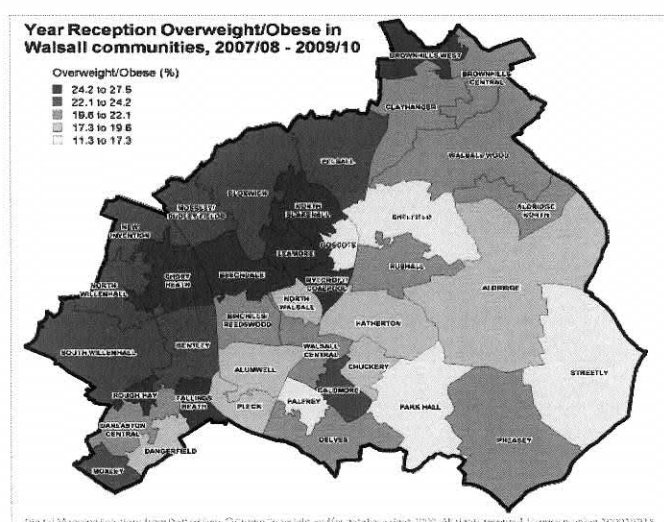
Source: NHS Walsall



## Healthy lifestyle choices

Obesity is one of the greatest public health challenges facing Walsall today. Poor choices in lifestyle (smoking, diet and physical activity) continue to be above average in the borough. Childhood obesity is a particular concern with strongly links between childhood obesity and greater risk of disease and death in later life. Nearly 4 out of every 10 Year 6 children in Walsall are also considered overweight or obese.

The causal link between childhood obesity and social and economic deprivation is strong; for example as the following map shows; obesity rates are higher in the most deprived wards in the West of the Borough.



**Figure 29:** Walsall communities overweight/obese at age 4-5 2007-2010

Source: JSNA

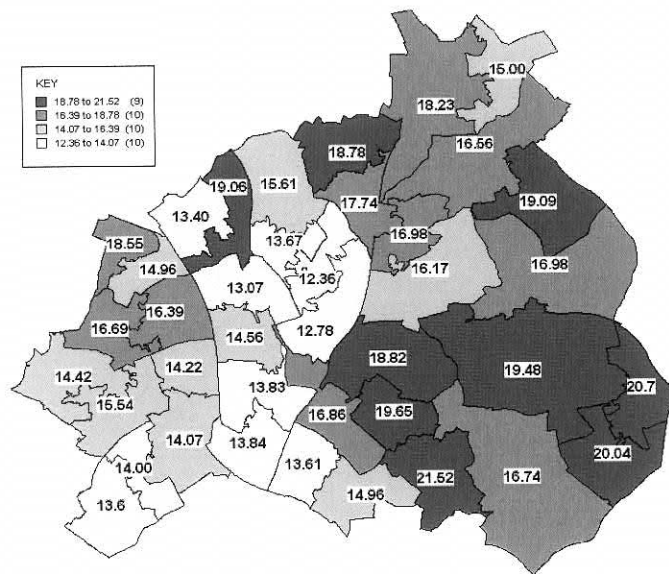
National research predicts that by 2015, 36% of men and 28% of women aged 21-60 living in England will be obese; it is likely that rates in Walsall will be even higher and obesity is already a very significant contributor to illness and premature death in the Borough.

Serious health consequences include Type II diabetes, cardiovascular disease, liver disease, musculoskeletal disorders such as osteoarthritis, and certain cancers. In 2008, around 1 in 4 adults in England were classed as obese. Local prevalence is more difficult to determine; in Walsall it is estimated that around 55,000 adults (26%) are obese and around 130,000 (62%) are overweight or obese.

Contributing to this are low levels of participation in physical activity; surveys show that more than 55% of Walsall residents take part in no recreational physical activity, compared to 47.4% nationally. Whilst the proportion of adults who take part in 3 x 30 minutes physical activity per week has increased from 16.1% in 2006 to 19.1% in 2010, active participation rates are well below the national average of 22.5%. This places Walsall as the 14<sup>th</sup> worst performing area of the 339 local authorities (bottom 4%). However, participation varies



significantly within the borough, from 21.52% in Park Hall through to as low as 12.78 % in Leamore (from 2010 data).



**Figure 30:** Walsall rates of participation in physical activity by community  
 Source: Sport England, Active People Survey 2010

Alcohol, Tobacco and Substance misuse

Nationally alcohol related deaths have significantly increased between 1991 (3,415) and 2010 (8,790). Walsall experiences high alcohol related harm across a number of health and crime indicators. There were 2,174 alcohol related recorded crimes in Walsall in 2009/10, whilst levels have reduced alcohol related crimes levels are higher in Walsall than the regional and national average.

The General Household Survey (2010) estimates Walsall has 34,058 hazardous drinkers, 33,550 binge drinkers and 10,174 harmful drinkers. The rate of alcohol related crime has fallen in Walsall in the last 5 years, though it remains higher than the regional and national rates. The reduction in alcohol related recorded crime has occurred during a period of sustained partnership working on a number of initiatives; a local alcohol arrest referral scheme, Operation Be Safe (concentrating on the town centre night-time economy) and campaigns to test purchasing to reduce sales of alcohol to children. Tackling alcohol abuse in Walsall requires a multi-agency approach given that alcohol use is likely to coexist with other problems including mental health issues, homelessness and poly drug use.

Walsall has a higher rate of alcohol related hospital admissions than the national and regional average; in 2009/10 there were 2,121 alcohol related admissions in Walsall, an increase of 6% on 2008/9. The rate of admissions for under 18's (59 per 100,000 of population) is considerably lower than the West Midlands (65) and slightly below the national rate of (62). This downward trend has been evident since 2008 providing evidence

of the increasing effectiveness of the strategies employed to reduce alcohol abuse in Walsall.

A total of 215 young people received a treatment intervention in young people’s community alcohol services in Walsall in 2010/11 with a total of 135 new treatment presentations.

Year	2003/04 to 2005/06	2007/08 to 2009/10
Walsall	84.04	58.97
W Mids	68.27	64.6
England	65.94	61.81

**Figure 31:** Alcohol specific hospital admissions under 18's in Walsall  
Source: LAPE 2011

Smoking is still the single greatest cause of illness and premature death in England – killing one in two smokers prematurely. Those who die as a result of a smoking related illness will have lost, on average, 10-15 years of life. In 2009 there were 1192 smoking related deaths in Walsall. Smoking is the single biggest modifiable risk factor for cancer and heart disease and a major factor for: Lung cancer (84% of all deaths), cardiovascular disease (17% of all heart disease deaths) and respiratory diseases, such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) (84% of deaths from COPD).

The estimated prevalence for smoking within the Walsall population is 24.5%, representing approximately 50,000 adults. Rates of young people’s smoking are reported to be rising nationally but local figures are unclear at the moment. Rates of smoking during pregnancy are also high in Walsall 16.8%, compared to nationally (14%). 4000 people used Walsall’s smoking cessation services in 2010/11 but as research shows that at any one time 70% of smokers want to stop there’s an approx 35,000 potential users of stop smoking services in Walsall indicating a high level of unmet need.

In terms of drug misuse, there are an estimated 2,000 problematic drug users (i.e. those who misuse heroin or crack cocaine) in Walsall. With 1,316 individuals engaged in structured treatment programmes in Walsall and more than 700 engaged in open access, outreach and needle exchange services as at September 2011. Local research suggests that there is a cohort of 70–100 problematic drug users that are not known to service providers or are not engaged in any form of treatment/intervention.

Walsall Council and Public Health colleagues have recently joined forces to research health and well-being issues through a large scale survey ‘Your Place, your well-being’ survey and results will help us gain a fresh insight into some of the barriers to leading healthier lifestyle that exist in the borough. Results from which will be available during July 2012.

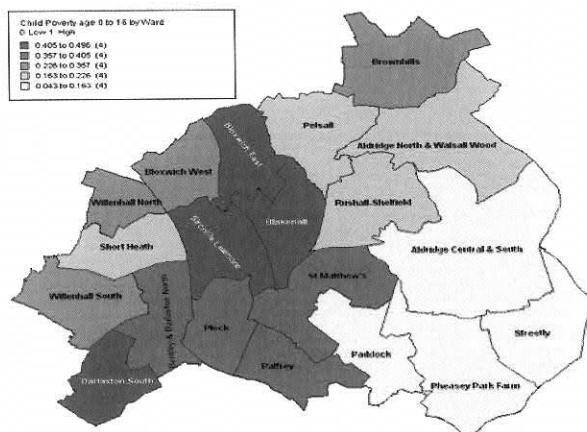
## Vulnerable Children

Walsall's Children's Services has developed a new way of working; a 'child & family support framework' approach; with the aim of engaging with children and families at the earliest possible opportunity to try and prevent children coming into the care system, and returning children, who have been taken into care, more quickly to family life. The key features of this new way of working are;

- new area family support teams that are based in different localities, with multi-agency staff offering support to families; refocus of the work of Walsall's 18 children's centres onto early help and prevention and Think Family team and Spurgeons Family support;
- enhanced social worker capacity; clearer pathways to make services more transparent; improving placement choice for looked after children

Child poverty is a key social determinant to reducing inequalities in health and social exclusion in our society. Reducing child poverty is a key council priority. In Walsall, 30.6% of children were living in families whose income fell below 60% of the median national income in 2009, which equates to 16,675 children aged under 16 living in poverty in 2009, up by 1,010 from the previous year. In 2009 Walsall ranked 124<sup>th</sup> out of 152 councils in England. The geographical variation in Walsall is substantial, ranging from 49.6% of children living in poverty in Blakenall to only 3.4% in Streetly. Changes to working tax credits could place an estimated additional 2, 200 children in relative poverty in Walsall (Source: Institute for Fiscal Studies)

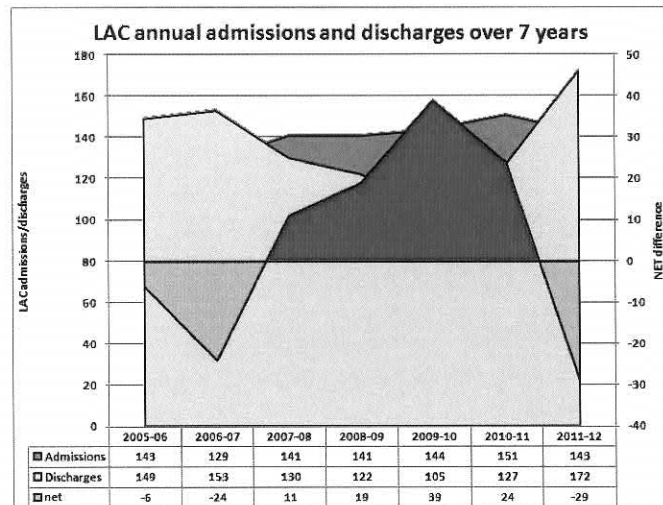
**% of children age 0 to 16 in families with income below 60% of the national median level (2009)**



**Figure 32:** Child poverty 0-16 by ward  
 Source: HMRC 2011

A high number of children in Walsall, particularly in the most deprived wards, require looking after by social care and those that are looked after have been staying in our care

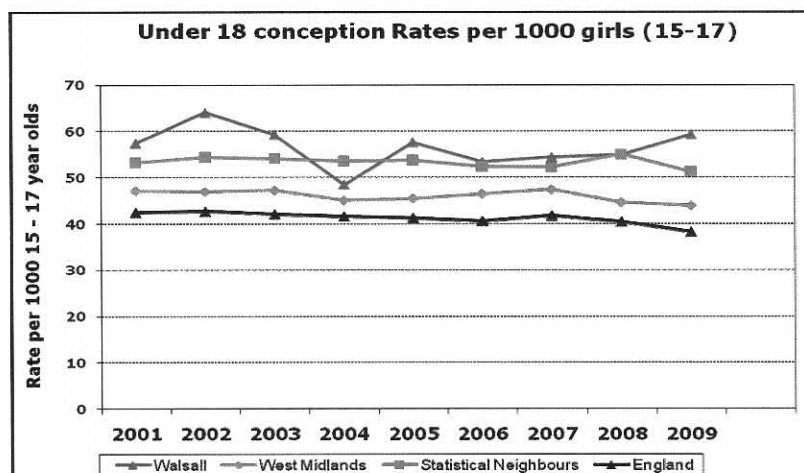
system for longer periods. The graphs shows a greater net difference between LAC admissions and discharges between 2007/08 and 2010/11 peaking in 2009/10, with a slowing down trend ever since. 2011/12 shows a net decrease in LAC numbers for the first time since 2006/07.



**Figure 33:** LAC Annual Admissions and Discharges.2005-2012  
Source: Childrens Services (PARIS)

In Walsall the aim is to ensure that all our young people have the skills, confidence and motivation to look after their sexual health and delay becoming parents until they are ready emotionally, educationally and economically.

Our teenage pregnancy rate in 2010 was 51.4 conceptions per 1,000 girls aged 15-17. This is 132<sup>nd</sup> rank, well into the bottom quartile and is significantly higher than statistical neighbours. However after three years of increasing rates the fall from 2009 to 2010 is positive and was the 69<sup>th</sup> best reduction nationally.



**Figure 34:** Under 18 conception rates per 1000 girls aged 15-17, 2001-09  
Source: JSNA

ENDS.