

# Health and Wellbeing Board Priorities 2023/24

**WE ARE  
WALSALL  
2040**



# Introduction

This Report is the second annual update on the delivery of the three priorities agreed in the [Walsall Joint Local Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2022-25](#):

- (i) Mental Health and Wellbeing
- (ii) Children and Young People
- (iii) Digital Footprint / Approach

Our Board membership covers all aspects of service and, therefore, each organisation/department will have their own specific approach to these priorities; but all are united on a focus of reducing inequalities and making the most of potential.

Each member has submitted an update covering four points:

- How the priorities have been approached this year
- What challenges have been identified
- What partnerships and developments have been identified
- Plans for 2024/2025

# Members' Update



# Children and Young People



### **Walsall Together and Children's Services**

- The Family Hub and Start for Life Programme was launched in April 2022. Walsall was awarded £3,869m funding over a three-year period from April 2022- March 2025.
- There are 4 Locality Family Hubs in Walsall which provide a welcoming space where children, young people aged 0-19 and up to 25 for those young people with additional needs and their families can go to get advice and support when they need it.
- The Family Hubs are in the heart of communities, services such as Midwives, Health Visitors, School Nurses, Speech & Language Early Help, Children's Social Care, DWP Housing and Police have come together to provide a central access point for families to get help and support.
- A comprehensive needs assessment has been developed to inform the implementation plan and help identify where additional resources / support is required in the areas of poorest outcomes.
- A dedicated website for Walsall Family Hubs [www.walsallfamilyhubs.co.uk](http://www.walsallfamilyhubs.co.uk) is available providing advice and information for parents. The website also includes a service directory of all services available to parents who have children aged 0-19.
- Several apps have been commissioned to help families to get the right support around giving their children the best start in life.
- A Family Hubs outcomes framework is being developed which will identify how well the services are performing against the outcomes we want to achieve.

### **West Midlands Police**

- The Schools and Intervention Officers assigned to each of the 20+ secondary schools in the Borough, which were also reported on last year have been a huge success with excellent feedback from head teachers, staff, pupils and parents/carers. We have maintained these roles, despite significant staffing challenges, as we believe that what they are doing is so important.
- The role of the SIP Officer is to work in partnership with key stakeholders within their locality to operationalise co-ordinated early intervention and embed our trauma informed policing as part of a holistic and structured intervention plan for children and young people.
- Interventions will be data led and can be on an individual level (where the most appropriate agency can also lead on the completion of an Early Help Assessment) or as a group intervention and/or prevention session. The completion of an Early Help Assessment supports a collaborative approach with a young person for a more formal arrangement. Being part of a multi-agency team will enable the SIP to consider thresholds and pathways for involvement.

### **One Walsall**

- The voluntary and community sector continues to deliver the holiday activity and food schemes successfully.
- The family hubs programme is well underway and the sector is engaged in the work. There has been progress across all key areas including a parenting volunteering programme. Although successful, there are challenges around the longer-term sustainability of the programme.

## Public Health

- The Healthy Child Programme 0-19 services continue to develop and are linked into regional and national initiatives to increase health visitor capacity. The Health in Pregnancy team saw 97% of women at 12 weeks, offering emotional/physical health advice.
- Launched the Dadpad app for expectant/new fathers in September 2023, with over 300 new downloads to date. Downloads to December 2023 equated to 28% of new fathers downloading the app in Walsall.
- Designed and commissioned a consultation with children and young people, exploring what keeps them emotionally well and increases mental resilience (reaching 192 young people, parents and professionals)
- Redesigned and procured a Children and Families Healthy Eating Programme that will work in schools and communities, thereby increasing access to good food for families.
- Pharmacies, Family Hubs and Health Centres are now providing Healthy Start Vitamins to eligible families to increase accessibility. Publicity produced and shared with partners to promote this free offer.
- Collaborated with Family Hubs, the Integrated Care Board and other organisations to raise awareness of key topics related to children and families such as breastfeeding and infant feeding, Healthy Start, advice for families and vaccinations.

## Healthwatch Walsall

- Healthwatch Walsall has almost concluded the Young Person project linking to teenage pregnancy during the second half of the work year.
- This work has focussed on an independent evaluation of two prevention programmes [Thrive] and [Teens & Tots].
- General youth engagement work will recommence across the Borough.
- Healthwatch Walsall is pleased to have been able to support Walsall College by having 2 young student work placements. Since commencing this initiative, the students have been supporting the work of Healthwatch Walsall.
- Healthwatch Walsall have successfully recruited a young person onto the Healthwatch Advisory Board.

## Childrens and Customer

- The Children's Alliance is driven by their commitment to regularly consider how the lived experience of children and young people in Walsall can be improved. Therefore, over the last 12 months the alliance has reflected on following key pieces of work to inform the development of the Children's 2040 Strategy:
  - Walsall 1001 days needs assessment.
  - Reformation 2 – the System: documentary made by black and mixed heritage boys around the issue of disproportionality.
  - MindKind/Sheffield university consultation with children and young people in Walsall on Mental resilience and wellbeing
  - Big Conversation January 2024 – a programme of activities engaging with 495 children and young people aimed at speaking and listening to children, young people about their views on what needs to be addressed as part of a 2040 strategy.
- On the 23rd of June 2023 the Alliance held its first 'Children First' Summit, bringing together 55 leaders from across Walsall to start a collaborative approach in developing the Children's 2040 Strategy. The Summit used scenario planning as a strategic planning tool to ensure that the Strategy is setting out flexible long-term plans to achieve our agreed goals.
- The Alliance has established a collaborative strategy writing group who are pulling together the learning from the above activities in the final 2040 Strategy which is scheduled to be signed off by the Alliance on the 22nd March 2024.

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# Mental Health and Wellbeing



## **Walsall Together**

- The Walsall multi-agency stakeholder panel has been running for a year. It is currently being refreshed to focus on strategic priorities across Walsall and streamlined reporting/governance.
- In collaboration with BCHFT we are developing the integration and reach of talking therapies, involving the third sector, and enabling those with long term conditions to access timely help.
- We are coordinating approaches to physical health checks for those with severe mental illness across primary care and BCHFT.
- The dual diagnosis pathway for BCHFT inpatients has been developed and is likely to be extended to Walsall Healthcare Trust (WHT). Primary care support for dual diagnosis has also been improved.
- Adolescents with complex needs is a partnership approach to support a very vulnerable group of young people who can “fall through the net” to avoid reaching crisis point.
- The development of a partnership strategy for dementia is in progress, including a needs assessment, current and future commissioning arrangements, and involvement of the third sector.
- The Prevention Concordat for Better Mental Health, being co-ordinated via Public Health, has had significant partnership input. It has been approved by Office for Health Improvement and Disparities and is due to be signed off by Chief Executive at Walsall Council for submission nationally.

## **Black Country Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (BCHFT)**

- Priorities have been approached through a multi-agency partnership group comprised of BCHFT, Public Health, Walsall Together, local VCSE groups and stakeholders.
- The group has focussed on a partnership approach to delivering the Mental Wellbeing strategy along with the delivery of partner’s priorities that required a multi-agency approach such as the delivery of the national Community Transformation Programme, the development of the Talking Therapies model and delivery of physical health checks for those on the severe mental illness register.
- The group has been refreshed for 24/25 to focus on strategic priorities across Walsall with a streamlined reporting and governance.
- The group is now well-established with a broad range of attendees from across the health & social care network.
- BCHFT have invested £400k over 23/24 (£200k) and for 24/25 (£200k) in local organisations led by Brownhills Community Association as part of our Community Transformation Programme to provide interventions that support the wider determinants of health. This was informed by partnership priorities and the local needs assessment.
- £50k was invested into Welfare Rights support for citizens with SMI.
- Recovery college has opened its base in Walsall in partnership with Walsall YMCA. They have also expanded the Recovery College course provision by commissioning courses from local VCSE providers in order to reach previously underserved communities.

## **One Walsall**

- The sector was significantly involved in the development of the pioneering Walsall Wellbeing outcomes framework which will now be implemented over the coming months. One Walsall has started to promote the framework with member organisations and explore ways to include the framework in evaluation reports.
- 29 VCSE organisations across the sector have secured funding from a small grants programme, met by health inequalities monies. A report is being completed by the end of the financial year outlining the learning from the work.
- BCHFT has issued a number of opportunities for the sector to engage with to creatively carry out mental health support. One Walsall has been asked to lead a multi organisation proposal to deliver Talking Therapies proposal. The learning from the proposal will be used to inform future delivery of services.
- The sector has also been involved in supporting work around suicide prevention and men’s mental health.



## Public Health

- The Thrive mobile wellbeing mobile unit supported 4759 people (Nov 22 – Oct 23), 3892 wellbeing plans were distributed (some taken for family members and friends); 399 sessions held via Citizen's advice
- Mustard seed counselling service have delivered 659 Counselling sessions between November 2022 and August 2023.
- Walsall bereavement service have delivered 213 (target for period 208) counselling sessions over a 5-month period; over 80% of clients are from areas of significant deprivation.
- Mental wellbeing and suicide prevention training was commissioned and began delivery in August 2023, and 6 multi-agency public facing mental wellbeing events were held over the course of the year.
- Where I Am men's programme - an Invitation to Quote to deliver phase 1 of coordinating interventions and programmes to improve men's wellbeing in Walsall closed on Wednesday, 7th February 2024, and is now being evaluated.
- Men's wellbeing development group is now established - approximately 38 partners are engaged in the Men's Development Group. The group meet monthly.
- Young people's enterprise grants (supporting young people to develop mental wellbeing projects) have been awarded – 3 projects confirmed subject to timelines and 3 further to be determined.
- Small mental wellbeing grant awards to support wellbeing projects focusing on men/wider community wellbeing: Caldmore Village; Mettatminds; MindKind Projects; Nash Dom CIC, Aaina and Walsall Black Sisters.

## Healthwatch Walsall

- Whilst Healthwatch Walsall have not had a specific project on mental health, we have undertaken a project on the experience of maternity services for Black and Asian Women [Report published early February 2024). Recognising the significance of maternal mental health, the project scope was expanded to explore whether women feel comfortable sharing their mental health concerns with professionals and to see if they would feel at ease seeking support when needed.
- The Healthwatch Walsall work project on Long COVID-19 shows that people's mental health has been impacted. Our final report was published in February 2024.
- It is also anticipated that our Young Person project relating to teenage pregnancy currently being undertaken will also flag up issues around mental wellbeing.

## West Midlands Police

- In April 2023, West Midlands Police moved to a new operating model which is focused around locally based policing teams rather than central directorates. As a result, we are seeing dramatic improvements in respect of recorded crime (so fewer victims, incl. Domestic Abuse and Violence), the speed at which calls for service are answered, the speed at which incidents are attended, large increase in arrest (but still only 23% are juveniles), a more focussed and effective approach to Domestic Abuse offences and a large rise in outcomes (charges, cautions, etc). The reduction in those offences which cause harm contributes to the health of the community.

## Childrens and Customer

- Current members of the Alliance include: Walsall Healthcare Trust (WHT), Black Country Integrated Care Board – CYP and Maternity; Walsall Together, Primary care and Black Country Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust; Walsall Council – Resilient Communities, Voluntary Sector, Walsall Learning Alliance, Walsall Council Children's Services, Public Health; Police; Education, WHG; Safeguarding Board; Wolverhampton University.
- The Alliance is supported by The Staff College as a critical friend, bringing in in best practice, research evidence and healthy challenge.
- The Alliance agreed to focus on joining the dots between key partnership Boards to ensure they maximise opportunities to advocate and influence the right issues/topics in the right place in relation to children. As a result the Alliance is currently 'nudging' the following programmes:
  - Development of Family hubs
  - Walsall Town centre regeneration
  - Community Safety partnership – Violence Reduction Strategy including research project.
  - Walsall learning Alliance – work around exclusion and belonging
  - Walsall Together - Poverty proofing services.

# Digital approach



### **Walsall Together**

- Implementation of Shared Care Record with access to our partners in sharing relevant information to improve care.
- Establish digital priorities in relation to the Borough-wide Digital Strategy
- Development of Walsall Wellbeing Outcomes Framework with an emphasis on mapping project and initiatives to Citizen Outcomes.
- Delivery of Phase 1 of New Well-being Service Directory

### **One Walsall**

- As a key partner, the VCSE has continued to support the Walsall Connected programme.

### **Public Health**

- Digital approaches used to streamline NHS health check reporting and payment processes in Public Health.
- New interactive digital approach being used for Public Health planning.
- Digital stop smoking intervention currently being piloted and will be reported on

### **Healthwatch Walsall**

- Last year Healthwatch Walsall had a new website and a new Feedback Centre which is the platform for the public to provide feedback on health and care services.
- Statistics on the number of views and feedback left on the digital platform are reported on a quarterly basis as part of our contract monitoring report.
- Healthwatch Walsall linked in with Healthwatch England regarding its work around digital inclusion.
- Healthwatch Walsall will be meeting regularly with the ICB in Walsall Place to discuss digital access/primary care engagement.
- Ensuring we have the right digital systems and data processes in place is critical to the local and national work of Healthwatch.
- Healthwatch check compliance, including how we store data securely and have agreements in place with organisations, including other Healthwatch organisations, when we share data.

The image features a grayscale background with silhouettes of four people on a rocky mountain peak. One person on the left is standing on a rock, holding the hand of another person who is climbing. A third person is sitting on a rock in the foreground, and a fourth person is on the right, reaching out with both hands towards the climber. The word "Challenges" is centered in the middle of the image in a black, sans-serif font.

# Challenges

### **Childrens and Customer**

- The Alliance is ambitious around their strategy and although there is good engagement from strategic partners we are worried about the capacity within the system to continue meaningful codesign and collaboration with children and young people as none of the partners have a designated resource for this.
- HWBB support in securing designated resource to support participation to ensure the strategy is co- delivered with children and young people.
- Effective data sharing between partners remains an issue and will impact on how we can measure impact and outcomes. This is a long-standing issue impacting a number of Partnership Boards. Support in securing effective data sharing is required.

### **Public Health**

- Ongoing intensive work is taking place to support health visiting workforce challenges and to support the service to undertake their critical primary prevention role – partnership discussions are supporting this, with Children’s Services, Early help colleagues and Safeguarding partnership colleagues
- Partnership support for our new Children and Families Healthy Eating programme, and the Walsall Food plan in development will be critical to their success.
- Support is needed by partners to continue to promote the above Public Health commissioned services, alongside those commissioned by Black Country Healthcare Foundation Trust.
- Support also needed for raising awareness of simple things people can do to improve their own mental wellbeing, through use of wellbeing plans.

### **Healthwatch Walsall**

- Challenges faced relate to access to services across all workstreams.
- Reaching digitally excluded citizens in the Borough. Availability of technology and its use in health and social care provision.
- Availability and consistency of young people to support Healthwatch activities
- To support the above, need to consider incentivising young people to a long-term commitment - local authority support would be welcomed.
- Partnership support to sharing information (access to groups)

### **Black Country Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust**

- Governance and reporting has been refreshed to avoid duplication in reporting and meetings.
- A review of priorities was required to ensure that all partners were clear on focus and expectations.

### **Walsall Together**

- Family safeguarding is a successful model with both national and local evidence of impact. Currently we are struggling to identify a partnership approach to sustainable funding that meets the fidelity of the model for the mental health support for parents whose children are in children’s social care (child in need/ child protection)

### **One Walsall**

- Family Hubs work – some of the key risks around programme sustainability have been escalated.
- Further work is required around digital exclusion in communities. Some work is already underway across various partners. One Walsall is seeing similar issues identified by our Impact team’s work which it will feed into key stakeholders.
- Ensuring that equality, diversity and inclusion is embedded across all our work and by our partners.

### **West Midlands Police**

- This remains the same as last year - across the areas of Community Safety within Walsall borough, it is our ambition to encourage a greater participation from Mental Health colleagues in respect of the work around the Safer Walsall Partnership, the Safeguarding Partnerships, the CONTEST Strategy etc.. Mental Health is a regular feature within the lives of vulnerable victims and offenders, is incredibly prevalent, and seems to continue to be a rising tide.



# Future Plans

### **Walsall Together**

- Primary care mental health redesign will consider work with the homeless and work with veterans.
- Plans for the Family Hub programme will be updated in accordance with the guidance from the DofE.
- Continued development of Shared Care Record and development of an integrated borough-wide digital strategy
- Continued Development of Wellbeing and Population Outcomes Framework
- Continued enhancement of the Well-being Service Directory

### **Black Country Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust**

- We are working with Walsall Together to develop an improvement plan for severe mental illness physical health checks.
- The development of a partnership strategy for dementia is in progress, including a needs assessment, current and future commissioning arrangements and involvement of the third sector.
- Summer 2024 will see the opening of our new Older Adult Mental Health Hospital on the Dorothy Pattison site.
- Continued delivery of the Walsall Mental Wellbeing Strategy
- Delivery and evaluation of the VCSE offer for the wider determinants of health and the Talking Therapies Plus model
- Using the group to provide a link between the local Suicide Prevention Group and the development of the Black Country Suicide Prevention strategy.

### **One Walsall**

- Once mobilised the learning from the mental health programmes including the Wider determinants of Health & Talking Therapies will be shared.
- Further work to explore how Walsall can become a trauma-informed borough with all partners will evolve.
- One Walsall is reviewing its business development tool, that it uses with members ensuring EDI & health and wellbeing principles are embedded. One Walsall will highlight the learning from the new mental health funded programmes.
- One Walsall is keen to work with Public Health through research opportunities around issues of poverty which affect all 3 priority themes.
- One Walsall will continue to promote and showcase the work of the VCSE using various media and events.
- One Walsall is reviewing its 3-year strategy and will embed the priorities within its future plans.

## Public Health

- Ongoing partnership work through Family Hubs work programme (Public Health lead the Infant Feeding workstream) and with our 0-19 healthy child programme.
- Implementation of our new Children and Families Healthy Eating programme will also take place, alongside a proposed update to our Stop Smoking in pregnancy programme
- Review of all mental wellbeing programmes commissioned via Public Health will be undertaken during 2024/25 (currently being delivered using non-recurrent funding) – reprofiling funding into future years, and prioritising certain programmes for recurrent funding should this become available.
- Ongoing process of identifying digital opportunities for progressing public health programmes, both within the Public Health team and working with our provider services.
- Digital stop smoking pilot results will be shared, and will guide future decision making re digital tools to support quits.

## Healthwatch Walsall

- Under the Healthwatch Walsall governance process, the work programme for 2024/2025 will be discussed at the forthcoming Advisory Board Meeting being held on 21 February. Following ratification of the work programme an Annual Work Plan will be published on the Healthwatch Walsall website.
- Proposals for the forthcoming year will be on:
  - Young carers
  - Cancer services
  - Urology services
  - GP access, including GPIP
- The Healthwatch England transformation is a long-term project which will continue through 2024/2025.
- Results from listening survey will be taken into account.
- Continued engagement with ICB digital team re primary care access.
- Will continue to liaise with young people throughout the Borough to seek intelligence about issues they are facing in health and social care services.
- Young carers project to be undertaken during 2024/2025 once ratified by the Advisory Board.
- Young people support the Enter & View programme.

## Childrens and Customer

- The Children's 2040 strategy will be in place by April 2024 - this will then be 'socialised' through the various partnership boards to inform implementation plan (contribution of each partner/ship to the strategy with regular monitoring on progress and impact)
- The Big Conversation was our first phase in collaborating with children and young people in the strategy. Additionally we have following activities planned with children and young people:
  - Phase 2 – February – Summer 2024 – Big Collaborate - Opportunity to collaborate with children and young people on the actions to implement the strategy
  - Phase 3 – Summer 2024 and beyond – Big Action – Co-production on the delivery of the strategy



## West Midlands Police

- A new multi-agency, ambitious approach to the communities of Blakenall and Bloxwich, looking at a 5-year strategy and some really innovative working;
- 2023 saw the launch of the Walsall Serious Violence Duty, a multi-agency Strategy delivered under the leadership of the safer Walsall Partnership. The issues of Serious Youth Violence, Knife Crime, Exploitation, Vulnerability, Violence Against Women & Girls, etc. are addressed within this.
- The 10-year Alcohol and Drugs Strategy (along with Public Health and other colleagues) with some innovative partnership working in development around on-street drinking mixing in health, diversion and enforcement options.
- A continued multi-agency approach under Operation ARGONITE, which has reduced violence and vulnerability within the Walsall Night Time Economy, along with recent additions such as a 'safe space' and Street Pastors;
- Keeping people safer through the introduction of the Protect Duty (aka 'Martyn's Law'). This has not gone through Parliament yet as it had been scheduled but we are working locally to introduce many of the measures anyway because they keep people safer;
- A review of the pertinent and recent Domestic Homicide Reviews to look for cross-cutting themes and opportunities for learning and improvement;
- The extension of the capabilities within the multi-agency Exploitation and Vulnerability Hub, including a new pro-active local police team focussing upon Serious Organised Crime and Exploitation – hopefully to be realised this year.