

Portfolio Holder Briefing



Walsall Council

Areas of Responsibility	Lead Executive Director
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social Care services for older people and people with learning disabilities, physical disabilities or mental health needs• Health partnerships• Integrated Care Board health interface lead• Safeguarding• Protection for vulnerable adults• Transition arrangements between Children's and Adult Social Care• Early intervention and prevention• Ofsted and CQC• Adult Social Care transformation & reform• Adult Social Care Commissioning• Market Shaping & Management• Adult Social Care Brokerage	Adult Social Care and Public Health – Kerrie Allward

Partnership Board Membership

Member of Health and Wellbeing Board

Portfolio Holder Report – Adult Social Care

1. Foreword

As the portfolio holder, I am continually impressed by Adult Social Care's (ASC) forward-thinking culture, which regularly reassesses our methods for providing outstanding services to residents and continuously strives for improvement and innovation. My portfolio report captures both the breadth and complexity of my portfolio, showcasing accomplishments and significant achievements, which I am particularly proud of. These achievements are even more remarkable given the current economic circumstances.

2. Strategic Context

This report is developed with reference to the Council's Corporate Plan (2022/25), and We Are Walsall 2040 (WAW204) with alignment to the Council's area of focus for People - *Supporting and empowering Walsall residents and communities to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives* and WAW2040 ambition 2 linked to health and wellbeing. As is the case for the Council's Corporate Plan, ASC is committed not just to make improvements for people accessing its services today but also has a responsibility to make sure our offer is fit to continue to support people with eligible needs live a good life in the future.

We are aware that while more people are living longer, many are experiencing ill-health and more complex needs, placing substantial pressure on the ASC system. We are taking action now to develop a model that optimally uses our resources and can support our residents in the future. This involves having a concerted approach towards prevention and early intervention, as well as fostering resilient, self-supporting communities. While making the best use of our collective resources, we will also focus on maintaining and enhancing resident independence, which requires us to challenge existing methods of providing support with our partners.

Adopting a preventative approach and a reimagined framework of care that prioritises early intervention, reablement and community-based support will require a collaborative effort across multiple sectors, leveraging expertise of technology providers, care professionals, and policy makers to create a unified system. By embracing such partnerships, ASC can open new avenues for delivering care that not only meets the immediate needs of residents, but also anticipates and mitigates future challenges. By remaining ahead of the curve and adopting technological advancements, such as AI, ASC can tackle backlogs, streamline operations and actively shape the future welfare of our residents.

Risks and Opportunities

Long-term funding reductions, coupled with population increasing, inflation, and pressures in the workforce have come together to create a difficult picture for the local authorities, providers and the workforce.

While times remain difficult, there are still opportunities for ASC and the wider health system, colleagues, partners and providers to work together to plan for and mitigate the risks we face while also planning to make the most of the available opportunities for the borough.

Key achievements, impact and ongoing work

Our outcomes and markers of success are aligned to our Council's area of focus for People – **Supporting and empowering Walsall residents and communities to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives.**

Outcome 1 People can access support in their community to keep safe and well and remain independent at home.
Our Markers of success <ul style="list-style-type: none">• People are supported to build on their strengths and those in their communities to maintain and/or maximise their independence.
Impact <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demand on services - We have supported 2666 individuals to build on their strengths to maintain and/or maximise their independence. This is a 16% increase in comparison to last year.• Feedback from residents - 77% of People using services reported they felt safe. 92.6% of People using services felt that the services they receive made them feel safe.• Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) Clinics – OTA's assess and recommend provision of lower-level equipment and adaptations to support people to remain independent in their own homes for longer. Clinics were introduced at Goscote in August allowing an OTA to assess 4 people within one day, a 100% increase in capacity when compared to home visits. Work is currently under way to double the capacity and to introduce more clinics in community-based settings. By using this approach, we have achieved better outcomes for people promoting independence in a timelier way.• Disabled Facilities Grant - Working with colleagues in Housing Standards and Improvement OTAs have also reduced the Disabled Facilities Grant application timescale by including the initial part of the process within the clinic appointment. From its inception in August 2023 to the end of March 2024 over 200 people benefitted from this service.• In house Provider services - Within our inhouse provider services, the outreach staff have now achieved independent travel training accreditation which has enabled support to be provided to increase the independence of people to access the community independently. As well as working with adults, the outreach service provides support to children's services and they work with individuals from the age of 16 to promote their independence with life skills and travel training to reduce the need for them to enter adult social care services.
Outcome 2 People are supported to maintain or improve their health, wellbeing and quality of life.
Our Markers of success <ul style="list-style-type: none">• People know how to maintain or improve their health and wellbeing and get timely support for this, where required. People can access timely social care support and reablement to prevent a hospital admission or facilitate a timely discharge.
Impact <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1857 individuals received reablement during the year who previously were not receiving services, of which 77% received no further support.• We supported 3259 people in the community, an additional 7.03% more than 2022/23.

Our accomplishments and successes

- **Health Service Journal (HSJ) Award** - We have been successful in winning the prestigious 'Place-based Partnership and Integrated Care Award' for the Walsall Together Place Based Partnership. Walsall Together was recognised for its work to improve outcomes for the residents for Walsall. The partnership was recognised for the significant integrated work that has been done from hospital avoidance, discharge pathways (NHSE national pilot site), enhanced care homes support, workforce recruitment and retention and community resilience.
- **Local Government Chronicle (LGC) Awards** - Walsall Together was shortlisted in the health and social care category at this year's awards. Walsall Together is delivering on our ambition to improve the health and happiness of residents through integration keeping more people out of hospital, improved discharge pathways, enhanced care homes support, boosted workforce recruitment and retention, and bolstered community resilience.
- **Carers Support** - As the lead partner of a consortium formed of neighbouring local authorities Dudley, Sandwell, Wolverhampton we have been successful in securing funding in the region of £1,077m across the Black Country from the Department of Health's Accelerating Reform Fund (ARF). We are currently considering a number of innovative opportunities focused on person centred care, supporting unpaid carers to live healthy and fulfilling lives.
- **ASC Operational Workforce** - We are extending our programme of Social Work degree apprenticeships, thanks to a successful bid for £120,000 grant to recruit external SW degree apprentices in 2024. We supported 15 social workers to complete the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) programme in 23/24.
- **Community Reablement** - ASC have secured funding to develop a community reablement offer as part of a wider Pathway to Independence model of support. This will ensure that people received support to maximise their independence before long term support is put in place.
- **Financial Assessments** - Work is continuing to reduce the number of people with an accrued debt and recovery of income. Referral to assessment times for a financial assessment has been reduced significantly which improves the level of income the Council collects.

Ongoing Work

- **Commissioning** - We are working towards shifting the core principles of the care market from focusing on price to prioritising quality and sustainability. Realigning our commissioning practices towards engaging with our providers, developing a local quality model and a focus on outcomes. We are developing a more integrated and joined up approach to commissioning by creating a place-based commissioning approach and a People commissioning within the Council.
- **Care Quality Commission (CQC)** - Preparation work is underway in readiness for CQC to review, assess and report on council regulated adult social care functions.

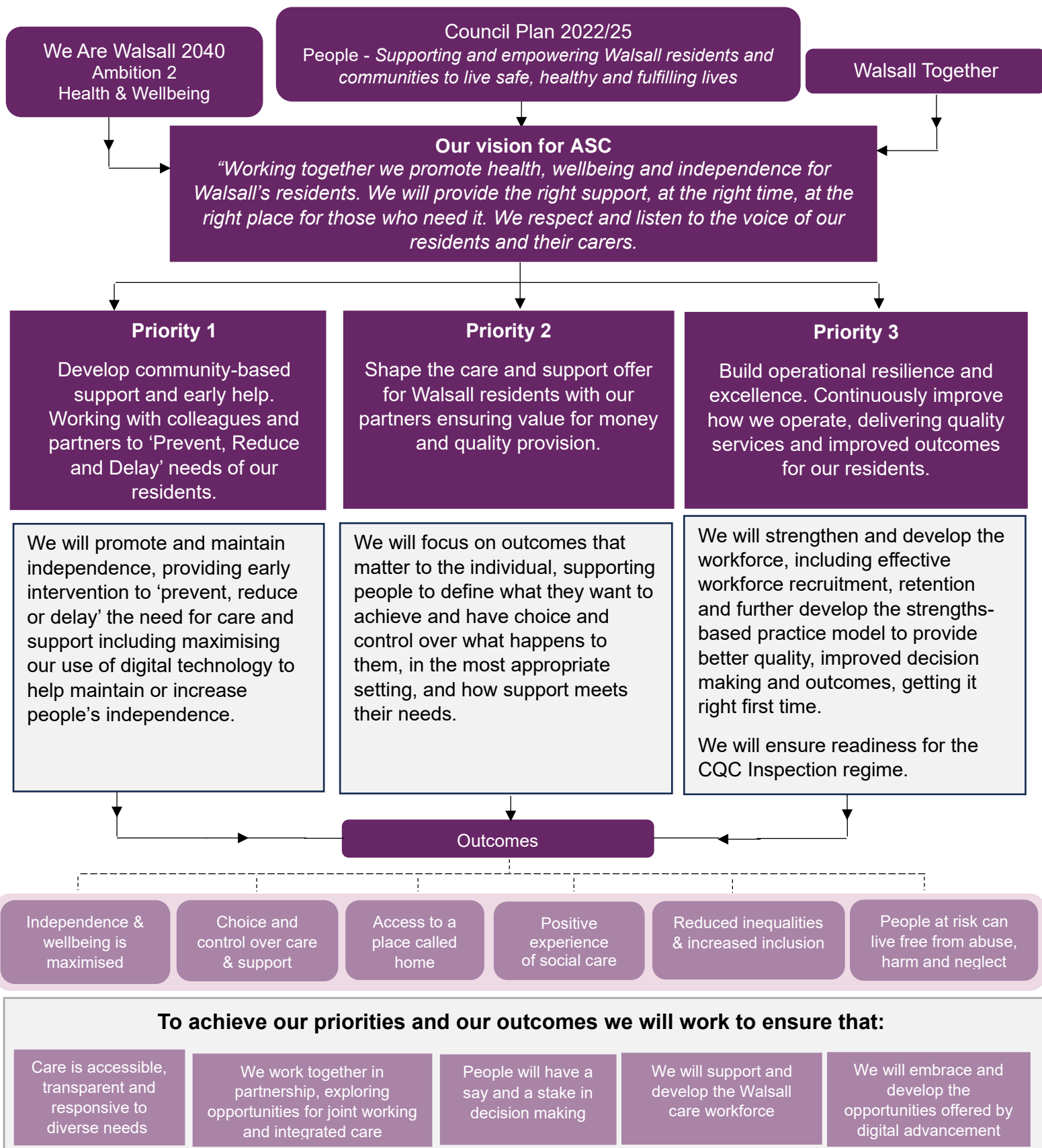
Our performance

- **Deprivation of liberty safeguards (DoLS)**

- We have seen a 26.4% increase in DoLS referrals received during 2023/24 compared to the equivalent period in 2022/23.
 - We have seen a 27% increase in the number of DoLS applications completed between April and March 2024 compared to the same period in 2022/23.
 - We are seen a reduction in outstanding DoLS applications from 335 at the end of 2022/23 to 216 by end of March 2024. Average waiting time down from 106 days in Mar 23 to 46 in Mar 2024 (56.6% decrease).
- **Assessments**
 - We have seen a 1.4% decrease in the percentage of assessments that led to a care and support plan compared to the same period in 2022/23.
 - We have seen a 16.5% decrease in the customer Median journey time compared to the same period in 2022/23.
 - We have seen a 31.5% decrease in the number of long-term assessments outstanding for over 28 days compared to the same period in 2022/23.
- **Reviews**
 - We have seen a 23.6% increase in the percentage of people receiving an annual review compared to the same period in 2022/23.
 - We have seen a 57.4% increase in the number of planned reviews undertaken compared to the same period in 2022/23.
- **Employment**
 - The number of people supported by employment services during 23/23 was 168 which is an increase from 161 the previous year and 141 the year before that. As a result of involvement with employment services, 44% of the people involved with them are in education, employment or training who otherwise would have been in the NEET group (not in education, employment or training).

3. Future Priorities and Plans

We have identified three key priorities for 2024/25 which will enable us to strive towards our vision for ASC and achieve the outcomes we want to see for our residents. Our commitment to safeguarding, to listening to the views of residents who are experts by experience, and putting the people we support at the heart of all we do remains integral to our plans.



Our areas of focus for 2024/2025

Initiatives	Priority alignment	Our approach
<p>Develop an Integrated Early Intervention and Well-being Offer.</p> <p>Work with Colleagues and Partners to Prevent, Reduce and Delay needs of our residents.</p>	Priority 1	<p>Working in collaboration with partners - Improve our early intervention and prevention offer in communities to prevent, reduce and delay the need for adult social care services and where people do make contact, improve our advice, information and signposting.</p>
<p>Continue the Walsall Together Alliance Success.</p> <p>Further develop external partnerships i.e. ICB, Walsall Together, ADASS, UKHSA and OHID and explore opportunities for shared priorities.</p>	Priority 2	<p>Build on our success with our Walsall Together Alliance.</p> <p>Continue our great work with colleagues and partners ensuring people experience a seamless care and support journey, and their support is co-ordinated across different agencies and services.</p>
<p>Enhance Transitions for Children to Adult Services</p>	Priority 2	<p>Improve the experience of transitioning from Children Services to Adult Social Care.</p>
<p>Ensure value for money, quality provision through our commissioned providers.</p>	Priority 2	<p>Ensure all adult provision, older people, Learning Disability, Autism and Mental Health Needs (predominantly supported living and complex residential) are good quality, cost effective and fit for purpose.</p>
<p>Deliver service redesign/development to improve outcomes and efficiency and deliver within budget set.</p>	Priority 3	<p>Ensure readiness for CQC Inspection regime</p>

Our ASC Continuous Improvement Projects for 2024/2025

Our ASC Continuous Improvement Programme (CIP) designed and developed to address challenges of increasing demand, financial pressures, improving service quality, remains our conduit to deliver better outcomes for residents.

ASC Continuous Improvement Projects	Priority alignment	Our approach
Establish an In-House Reablement Service.	Priority 2	Create a pathway and service to provide community reablement to maximise the independence of adults with physical health needs at initial assessment and review.
Support for Carers	Priority 2	Enhance our support offer to carers to ensure carers are recognised and valued and are supported to maintain their caring role.
Shared Lives	Priority 2	Increase shared lives availability and use as an alternative to people moving to residential or supported living accommodation.
Learning Disability, Mental Health & Autism, Market Management	Priority 2	Ensure that Provision for Adults with a Learning Disability, Autism and Mental Health Needs (predominantly supported living and complex residential) is good quality, cost effective and fit for purpose.
Strength Based Practice Reviews	Priority 3	Maximise individuals' independence and improve use of resources in support plans by utilising 'levers' to meet care needs, such as aids & adaptations, assistive technology, moving and handling techniques, community support offers etc
Health Funding	Priority 3	Ensure appropriate pathways, process and practice is in place to ensure that people eligible for health funding (CHC, S117 and Joint Funding) receive this funding.
Adult Social Care Charging	Priority 3 - Build	Ensure appropriate policies, pathways, processes and practice enabling client fees and charges to be collected in a timely way and minimise individual debt.

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ASC Continuous Improvement Projects	Priority alignment	Our approach
Community Prevention Offer	Priority 1	Improve our early intervention and prevention offer in communities to prevent, reduce and delay the need for adult social care services and where people do make contact, improve our advice, information and signposting.
ASC CIP Project - Enablement	Priority 2	Create a pathway and support offer to maximise the independence of Adults with a learning disability (LD), autism or mental health (MH) needs.
ASC CIP Project - Brokering Care	Priority 3	Expand on how we broker care – supporting wider financial controls aligning to contractual requirements; consistency mobilised through a single function; optimising opportunities to gather market intelligence to inform market management.
ASC CIP Project – Direct Payments	Priority 3	Redesign how we deliver direct payments, ensuring the model and processing going forward is accessible to people with care and support needs; is not overly bureaucratic; is proactively managed and fit for purpose.

Our enablers

There are several areas that we will be working on that will support the priority areas and work across the Continuous Improvement Programme.

- **ASC Market Management and Quality Improvement** - how we work with providers and commission support that focuses on outcomes and quality.
- **Workforce Strategy** - what skills and competencies we need the whole ASC workforce to have.
- **Co-production** – ensure that at all stages we are talking and listening to people who use ASC support.
- **Technology** – explore and implement use of technology enabled care to ensure we have better information to support decisions on how best to support people and work to maximum efficiency.
- **Performance and Quality Framework** - ensuring we have data and information on how we are performing to support continuous improvement.

4. Thank you

Amid increasing demands and significant pressures, I wish to extend my sincere gratitude to all informal carers. Your work, while often unnoticed, is greatly appreciated. You are the unsung heroes who make a profound difference in the lives of the vulnerable.

To our invaluable partners and providers, your co-operation and support are crucial to our achievements. Together, we are creating a care network where everyone feels valued, supported and cared for.

Lastly, to all the dedicated staff working across Adult Social Care, our colleagues in finance and across the Council your commitment and hard work are instrumental in supporting and safeguarding our most vulnerable people in Walsall.



Councillor Keir Pedley
Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care