

## Cabinet – 18 March 2015

### Walsall Works

**Portfolio:** Councillor Mohammed Nazir, Deputy Leader, Regeneration

**Service:** Regeneration

**Wards:** All

**Key decision:** No

**Forward plan:** No

#### 1. Summary

- 1.1. On the 8 February 2012 Cabinet made a strong commitment to supporting job creation by approving over £2million for the Walsall Works Apprenticeship programme, which is on track to support 1,565 16-24 year olds into positive outcomes by the 31 March 2015 including; 475 full and 430 pre-Apprenticeships.
- 1.2. The Walsall Works programme has total uncommitted reserves £377,760 (see table per 6.3) although it is expected that this will be fully utilised. This includes £100,000 available to support continuation of apprentice wage subsidy.
- 1.3. This report sets out the case for investing £400,000 of these reserves from the Economic Growth Programme, together with the £100,000 from the original budget allocation to create a £500,000 2015/16 Walsall Works programme.
- 1.4. In February 2012, unemployment benefit claimant levels for 18–24 year olds in Walsall were running at 15.2%, (3,530 young people) almost twice the national average (8%), with those aged 16-18 and classed as not in Employment Education or Training (NEET's) in Walsall, having the highest levels in the Black Country at 8.4% (588 young people).
- 1.3. In December 2014, the unemployment claimant levels for 18-24 years olds were recorded at better than pre-recession levels with only 4.9% (1,175 young people) in Walsall compared to 2.9% nationally. The borough now shows a downward trajectory showing that Walsall is continuing to close the unemployment gap with England with only 2 percentage points in difference.
- 1.4. Regeneration Officers have and continue to engage with; young people, training providers, schools, colleges, specialist agencies and large volumes of employers to promote the benefits of the Walsall Works programme. Both the Strategic Funding Agency (SFA) and the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) feel that our scheme is excellent and fits with their funding and delivery arrangements.
- 1.5. The performance of the programme has surpassed projected profiles and by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015, we will have supported 475 young people entering apprenticeships, 430 starting pre-apprenticeships (more recently launched by Government as

traineeships) and a further 660 into other positive outcomes such as learning, employment or apprenticeships not funded through Walsall Works.

- 1.6 The programme has worked closely with specialist providers to ensure our most vulnerable young people experiencing higher than normal levels of exclusion and difficulty, are drawn in and supported through the programme including those who are long term NEET, in or leaving care, those with a SEND status, homeless, young offenders, teenage parents, and those disadvantaged by their circumstances or living in poverty.
- 1.7 Flexibility has been at the heart of programme, and where necessary our approach has been flexed to meet the customer and employer needs.
- 1.8 A key principle of the programme is to maximise other partners funding as match into the programme and we have estimated that nearly £5m has been drawn in from the Skills Funding Agency, Department for Work and Pensions and Employers through salaries.
- 1.9 Measuring the social and economic return on our investment has enabled us to identify the impact that our core funding has made on savings in the way of resources in welfare benefits, crime, education, health and income to the exchequer in the way of earnings, tax and national insurance. The total savings and income is estimated as £2.8 million.
- 2.0 The Walsall Works name and branding is now widely recognised locally and across the sub-region by partners and young people and we have worked hard to market and showcase the achievements of the programme nationally through awards, conferences and networking events including a submission for the MJ Awards in 2015 in the Achieving Better Outcomes category.
- 2.1 Wider recognition of the brand name has resulted in expansion of our support to residents over the age of 25 who have asked for our assistance with their employment and training needs which has resulted in a new job matching service being launched in October 2014.

## **2. Recommendations**

That Cabinet;

- 2.1 Supports and approves the allocation of £400,000 of the reserves in the Economic Growth programme for the continuation of the Walsall Works programme.
- 2.2 Notes that this funding resource along with uncommitted funds in the existing Walsall Works programme will achieve the minimum outcomes set out below:
  - a. 110 young people into full Apprenticeships;
  - b. 100 young people through pre-apprenticeships, now formally Traineeships;
  - c. 600 young people into positive outcomes such as Employment and Training;
  - d. 200 people over 25 years old supported with their employability and into work.

- 2.3 Delegates authority to the Executive Director for Regeneration in consultation with the portfolio holder, to revise the programme design, costs, contents, duration and flexibility to facilitate its continuing ability to meet customer needs within approved spending limits.
- 2.4 Approves the programme expansion to support clients over 25 years old focusing mainly on matching clients to locally available employment vacancies.

### 3. Report Detail

- 3.1 On the 4 February 2012, Cabinet approved £2,190,000 of Council resource to the Walsall Works programme to help reduce youth unemployment in the borough, with the key aim of creating the conditions for economic growth through subsidised apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships within small medium sized enterprises.
- 3.2 The Employment & Skills Team designed the programme in consultation with young people, employers and partner organisations and the funding was profiled to last two years but due to the ability to maximise partners match funding the programme has been successfully in place for three years.
- 3.3 The focus was on creating new jobs for young people within the growth business sectors of engineering, manufacturing, construction, health & social care, logistics and business services.
- 3.4 A key principle of the scheme was to secure match funding in-kind to maximise the impact of the programme and this was achieved through Skills Agency Funding for training, Employers paying above average rates of pay for Apprentices, National Apprentice Service for apprentice subsidies and the Department for Work and Pensions contributions to training allowances for Pre-Apprentices.
- 3.7 The outcomes profile with performance to date is set out below.

Output Measures	Expected Outcomes 31 March 2015	Committed Profile to 31 March 2018	Additional Outcomes to 31 March 2018
Apprenticeship Starts	475	25	110
Pre-Apprenticeship Starts	430	0	100
Other Positive Outcomes	660	300	300
Total	1565	325	510

- 3.8 Measuring the wider economic and social impact of the programme has been of considerable interest to the Walsall Works Management Group. The 'invest to save' modelling has been undertaken using the government approved Manchester New Economy Unit Cost Analysis toolkit. A detailed calculation of savings and incomes is set out in Appendix 1.

- 3.9 Partners have demonstrated their support and commitment to the programme by making financial contributions. Department for Work and Pensions and Public Health have committed additional non recurrent funding, approx £110,000, to enhance the programme activity for our most vulnerable young people i.e. looked after children. This has resulted in Walsall Works engaging with 60 young people aged 16-24 years old who are transitioning from care to independent living. The additional resource has enabled a more focused targeting of employers to secure work placements, pre-apprenticeship and employment opportunities for this client group.

#### **4. Council priorities**

- 4.1 The Walsall Work programme contributes to all the priorities set within the Walsall Plan 2013 – 2016 which states that “Walsall will be a great place to live, learn, work and invest”. The plan holds within it four themes:
- Supporting businesses to thrive and supporting local people into work;
  - Improving health including well being and independence for older people;
  - Creating safe and sustainable communities;
  - Improving safeguarding, learning and life chances for children and young people.
- 4.3 The programme also contributes to the emerging six priorities set within the draft Corporate Plan which are:
- Creating jobs and helping people get new skills
  - Improving educational attainment
  - Support with cost of living
  - Helping create more affordable
  - Promoting health and wellbeing
  - Helping local high streets and communities

#### **6. Financial implications**

- 6.1 If the above recommendations are approved, this programme will be met through the remaining uncommitted revenue reserve already allocated to the Walsall Works programme and through uncommitted reserves set within the Economic Growth Programme which has been approved by Cabinet (£400,000)
- 6.2 The following table sets out actual spend plus known commitments up to 31 March 2015 (Column A). Note that the column A wage subsidy figure includes commitments that are not due to be incurred and paid out until after 31 March 2015, but they are known commitments as at 31 March 2015.
- 6.3 Column B summarises uncommitted requirements. The total committed and uncommitted amounts total £2,190,000, meaning that the entire revenue reserve allocated to Walsall Works would be fully utilised. Note that the management costs of £240,000 have already been approved in the ‘Extending the Economic Programme’ Cabinet report from December 2014.

	Actual + committed spend up to 31 March 2015 (A)	Uncommitted profile to 31 March 2018 (B)	Additional Funding Request (C)
Apprentice Wage Subsidy	£1,375,925.00	£100,000.00	£300,000.00
Pre-Apprentice Allowance	£ 62,500.00	£0.00	£32,625.00
Marketing Costs	£ 17,000.00	£7,000.00	£0.00
Walsall Works Mentors	£ 97,775.00	£0.00	£67,375.00
Entrepreneur Development	£ 29,240.00	£30,760.00	£0.00
Management Costs	£ 229,800.00	£240,000.00	£0.00
Total	£ 1,812,240.00	£377,760.00	£400,000.00

6.4 The additional funding request (column C) sets out the additional funding of £400,000 which is required to continue to support young people through wage subsidies into Apprenticeship, training allowances for Pre-Apprenticeships and funding to continue the secondment of a dedicated Mentor to keep learners motivated whilst on programme. This £400,000 is recommended to be sourced from unallocated reserves of £732,339 as set out in the December 2014 cabinet report – ‘Extending the Economic Programme’.

## **7. Legal implications**

7.1 All contractual arrangements (including any extensions to the existing arrangements) must be procured in compliance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (if applicable) and with the Council’s Contract Rules; and all grants must be applied for and administered in accordance with the Council’s Grants Manual.

7.2 The Council’s Legal Services Team will assist with developing new contracts, grant agreements and reviewing existing arrangements.

7.3 Legal Services will work with officers to ensure that all necessary legal processes will be in place to minimise the risk to the Council, whilst ensuring that the processes are not onerous.

## **8. Property implications**

8.1 None

## **9. Staffing implications**

9.1 Council staff based within Strategic Regeneration will manage and administer all aspects of this programme and work to understand the needs of residents. These costs are budgeted for in the funding profiles under the management and administration costs set out within financial profiles.

## **10. Equality implications**

10.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared and updated.

## 11. Consultation

11.1 Development of the Walsall Works programme and its ongoing delivery has been in consultation with the wide range of stakeholders, partners and forums:

- Residents (young people and adults)
- Employers (Small, Medium, Large)
- Integrated Young People Support Services (IYPSS)
- National Apprenticeship Service (NAS)
- Prospects Careers Service
- Strategic Funding Agency (SFA)
- Department of Work and Pensions (DWP)
- Walsall Works Training Provider Group
- Walsall College
- Walsall Adult Community College
- Performance through People
- Resources (human resource, revenue and benefits)
- Adult and Children Services
- Regeneration Services
- Money, Home, Jobs
- Social media networks (twitter, linkedin, facebook)
- Revenue and Benefits (including money, home, job)

### Author

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Simon Neilson  
Executive Director

27 February 2015



Councillor Mohammed Nazir  
Portfolio holder for Regeneration and  
Deputy Leader

27 February 2015



Real Skills

Real Jobs

Real Business

**CAREER** **YOUNG**  
**PEOPLE**  
**APPRENTICESHIPS**  
**EMPLOYERS**  
**FUTURE**

**REAL** **JOBS**  
**BUSINESS**  
**SKILLS**

**LEARN** **EARN**  
**WORK** **EXPERIENCE**  
**QUALIFICATIONS**

## Summary

**Walsall Works was launched in April 2012 and is a multi-million pound financial investment by Walsall Council. It symbolises the Council's vision of creating the conditions for sustained economic activity by supporting the growth of businesses and the creation of jobs in Walsall.**

**It achieves this by ensuring local residents have the right skills that match the business environment in order to make the most of opportunities. Its key ambition is to support young people into training and sustainable employment.**

*Walsall Works*



*Sonia Badhan (24)  
Supported by Walsall Works  
now a  
Dental Nurse at  
Key Dental Practice*

## Background

Walsall is situated at the heart of the country, home to over 250,000 people. It is one of the four local authorities (along with Wolverhampton, Dudley and Sandwell) situated in the Black Country, a sub region of the West Midlands. Walsall is a major metropolitan borough with a reputation built on a strong production base and an urban area renowned for its traditional manufacturing industry. Our transport networks, with the M6 running through and excellent rail and air connections mean we are an ideal location to reach suppliers and customers, across the UK and the globe.

Despite all this opportunity, our levels of unemployment have remained high and our skills levels have been amongst the worst in the region and country. This situation was further exacerbated following the recession in late 2008; when the number of young people facing the prospect of long term unemployment rose, together with the number of suitable jobs for their circumstances falling. Research on previous recessions showed that young people were more likely than other workers to face long-term negative consequences due to being unemployed. In Walsall unemployment benefit claimant levels for 18 -24 year olds in late 2008 was running at 15.2%, (3,530 people) almost twice the national average at 8%. With those aged 16-18 and classed as not in Employment, Education or Training (NEETs) having the highest levels in the Black Country at 8.4% (588 young people).

The ability for local employers in the private sector to create and fund new job opportunities was hindered by their financial circumstances, stifled by risk management and a general lack of growth in the economy. This came together with cuts to public funding in youth services and the loss of Education Maintenance Allowances, which resulted in a further increase in NEETs and youth unemployment levels in Walsall.

## Solution

In response to this local crisis, the Employment and Skills Team within the Council, developed and presented a solution to Councillors. The Walsall Works programme is born out of an idea to develop an attractive proposition to employers which encourages them to consider employing young people into apprenticeship positions. The positions need to lead to long term sustainable employment within key business growth areas identified by the private sector. Through consultation with employers, young people, training providers, colleges, the Skills Funding Agency, Department for Work and Pensions, a clear understanding of customer needs has been formed and opportunities for adding value are identified.



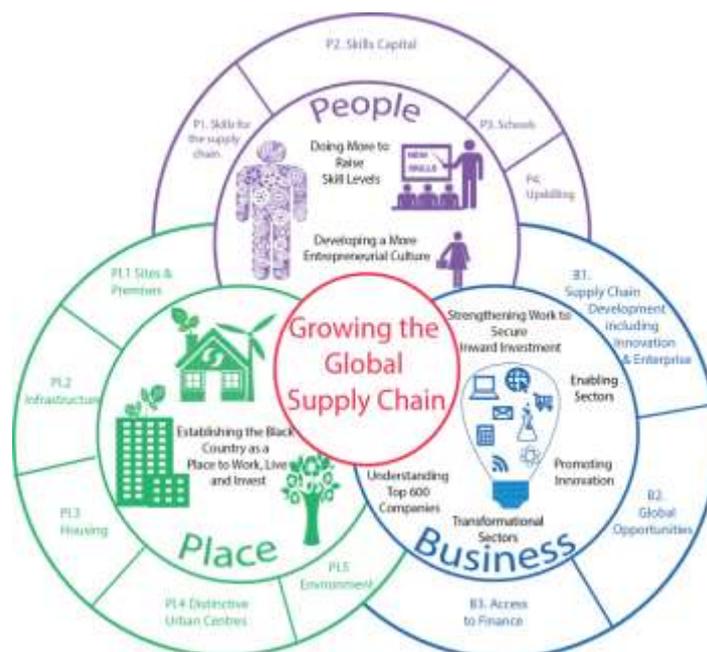
*Walsall Works*

*Marcus Tonkes*  
*Supported by Walsall Works*  
*now a*  
*Apprentice Welder*  
*European Heathyards*

The Skills Funding Agency and the National Apprenticeship Service support the programme and it fits with their funding and government delivery plans. The programme has been devised not to duplicate existing provision, but to deliver a flexible approach that adds value by removing barriers to participation by 16-24 year olds whilst unlocking jobs with employers.

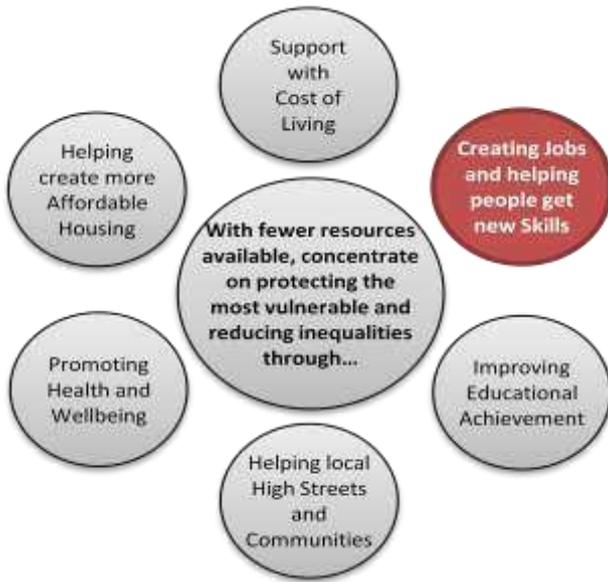
The solution, Walsall Works is a financial investment of £2.2 million by Walsall Council designed to tackle youth unemployment. Its key principles are aligned to the Council's key priority of 'supporting business to thrive and supporting local people into work' and the strategic priorities set within the approved Black Country Local Economic Assessment and the emerging Black Country Strategic Economic Plan.

### *Black Country Strategic Economic Plan*



*The Walsall Plan 2013-16*

*Corporate Plan 2014-15*



The scheme aims to raise the ambitions and aspirations of young people from within the borough of Walsall. Walsall Works' long term ambition is to continue to unlock new jobs and apprenticeship opportunities within micro, small and medium sized enterprises with a focus on those employment opportunities from within the growth sectors suggested by our Local Economic Assessment, outlined below:



Local Employers are offered an incentive payment to recruit a Walsall young people as an Apprentice. They are expected to pay the National Minimum Wage for the age of the young person, well above the national apprentice wage which is currently only £2.73 per hour. For example, a 21 year old apprentice is paid £6.50 per hour.

Walsall Works apprenticeships are paid jobs with learning and our employers are expected to offer the young apprentice a minimum employment contract of 35 hours per week for at least 12 months and to adhere to the agreed national minimum wage. They also commit to employing the young apprentice for the full duration of the apprenticeship which could last from 1 year to 4 years. A key condition of the incentive payment is that they offer at least a further 26 weeks of sustained employment after the apprenticeship has completed.

The incentive payment is reduced by £1500 if employers are eligible to claim the National Apprenticeship Service Age Grant for Employers. This ensures we maximise on mainstream provision from our partners before utilising our own grant funding.



Walsall Works offers young people the opportunity to undertake work based training and obtain the skills designed to meet the skills shortages identified by employers. The training leads to a nationally recognised qualification at intermediate, advanced and higher levels, so they learn while they earn and meet the skills needs of the local labour market.

In addition we actively support young people who do not meet the entry requirements of a full apprenticeship through a pre-apprenticeship programme in a range of sector based academies that respond to the needs of the local labour market. Pre-apprentice learners achieve a Level 1 in Literacy and Numeracy, a vocational qualification in a sector of their choice ie construction, an employability qualification and a 6 week work placement with an employer. Upon completion the progression is either into employment opportunities or into apprenticeship opportunities unlocked through the programme. This model was designed and began to be delivered nearly 3 years ago and we are currently recruiting our 7<sup>th</sup> cohort of learners. Our pre-apprenticeships were developed well in advance of the launch of the governments Traineeship model which replicated our programme almost like for like.

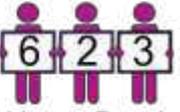
Walsall Works advises and guides young people ensuring they make informed choices that suit their skill set and career aspirations. We offer them access to a number of partner events i.e. careers events, employability forums, promoting opportunities events. We also support young people to register on the National Apprenticeship website and to navigate and improve their profile and their application form. Walsall Works has a proactive approach for young people to ensure that they are fully aware of the opportunities that are available locally, whether this is jobs or training.

## Changing Young People's Lives

Since launching our programme in the summer of 2012, we now have a database of 2,682 young people who have registered their interest in the programme. We maintain contact on a regular basis and to date we are aware that 1,486 young people have been supported into apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeships, employment, education and training, as set out below.

There have been  4 6 5 &  3 9 6 created and supported.

Apprenticeships      Pre-Apprenticeships

There have also been  6 2 3 helped into other positive outcomes.

Young People

*Walsall Works*



*Georgia Hodges (19)*  
*Supported by Walsall Works*  
*now a*  
*Apprentice Administrator*  
*Britannia Apprenticeships*

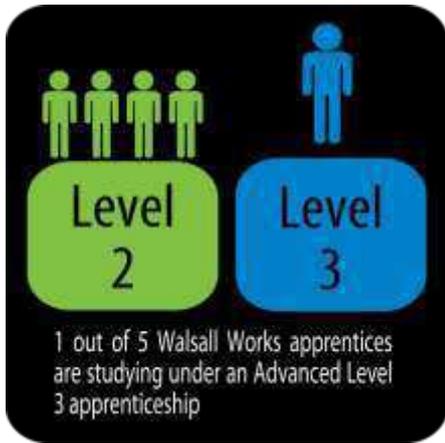
Walsall Works aims to support young people into positive pathways that appeal to them and suit their skill sets. We regularly promote, signpost, and hand-hold young people as well as booking appointments to provision that will help move young people into positive pathways. We achieve this by working in partnership with a wide range of organisations; such as Jobcentre Plus, training providers, community sector organisations and local colleges.

Weekly job vacancy bulletins are emailed to young people to inform them of the opportunities that are available in the growth sectors and this is followed up with a tailored offer of support. We use the internet widely including the use of social media via Twitter and Facebook to communicate opportunities and promote provision. In addition, we manage a text message service that sends information to young people as we are informed that this method is their preferred communication medium.

Our key aim is to ensure that young people are equipped with employment with learning as we know that helping young people achieve qualifications has a substantial impact on employment levels and also helps the borough bridge the gap between our known local skills levels and those nationally, as illustrated below.

Level of Qualification	Walsall Employment Rates	England & Wales Employment Rates
<b>No qualification</b>	45.2%	48.5%
<b>Level 1</b>	71.2%	73.8%
<b>Level 2</b>	77.1%	78.3%
<b>Level 3</b>	83.8%	83.5%
<b>Apprenticeship</b>	80.0%	80.7%

Source 2011: Census



Through our data, we know that one in five of our apprentices are studying an Advanced level of qualification. Improving skills and qualification levels has a profound outcome on the lives of young people, not only does it contribute to improved employment rates but also has an impact on well-being.

Here are some case studies and what young people say about the opportunities we have made possible.

*Walsall Works*



*Rachel Letford (22)  
Supported by Walsall Works  
now a  
Facility Management Apprentice  
Walsall Adult Community College*

*Walsall Works*



*Alex Jackson*

Alex Jackson (18) started his Engineering apprenticeship with Regent Engineering.

*'I am very excited to have the chance to progress further in the business. It's a brilliant opportunity to prove myself and move up'*

Adam Duckhouse (21) is employed as an Apprentice Mechanic with Motorland.

*'This apprentice scheme has been a lifeline to me because it's given me a purpose and made me feel like I can achieve something in my life. One day I hope to run my own business and I will always be grateful to Walsall Works for giving me this apprenticeship'*

*Walsall Works*



*Adam Duckhouse*

*Walsall Works*



*Amy Newton*

Amy Newton (21) is employed as an Apprentice Dental Nurse with Ashleigh Dental Practice in Bloxwich

*'I really enjoy it. It's a big change and it's something I always wanted to do'*

Amy is studying towards a Level 3 in Dental Services.

*Walsall Works*



*Daniel Cope*

Daniel Cope ( 23) impressed PAL Group with his determination and willingness to learn and once he had completed his Pre-Apprenticeship, he was given the offer to progress onto a full Engineering Apprenticeship with them.

After completing his Apprenticeship, Daniel has shown himself to be an important member of the PAL Group team and has been able to establish himself as a hardworking permanent member of their team.

*"I liked the idea of learning skills that would enable me to find an Apprenticeship in engineering or construction"*

*Walsall Works*



*Elisha Robbins*

Elisha Robbins (20) commenced on the Construction Pre-Apprenticeship course and commenced her work experience with Ashtree Property Services.

They were so impressed with Elisha's hardworking nature and dedication that they offered her a fulltime employment opportunity.

Since the programme started we have supported 465 young people into Apprenticeships. On average one per day.

This means that since our first start in



we have helped more than 1 person a day

## Invest to Save

The Walsall Works programme is built on a number of agreed principles, including:

- Maximising funding from partner organisations
- Drawing in match funding



**For every subsidised apprenticeship Walsall Works gives on average:**

- £3,800 to eligible employers as a financial incentive

**That's £3,800 per apprentice**

**For every subsidised apprentice the following amounts are leveraged in:**

- Average amount from Skills Funding Agency for training- **£4,431**
- Average amount from Employers for salary and Training - **£6,323**
- Average amount from other grants i.e. AGE -**£561**

**That's £11,315 per apprentice**



**is leveraged in from other sources**

*Walsall Works*



*Lewis Gedney (18)  
Supported by Walsall Works  
now a  
Apprentice Caliper Stripper  
Transaxle*

## Added Value

Using the New Economy Cost Benefit Analysis Toolkit Walsall Works has been able to make the following savings/benefits calculations:

Cost/Saving Category	Agency bearing cost or making saving	Unit	Estimated cost/saving	Total cost of individuals engaged in Walsall Works	Savings as a result of Walsall Works
Not in Employment Education or Training Average cost per 18-24 year old	Multiple	Per year	£4,528	£3,735,600	£1,082,192
Job Seekers Allowance for single claimant 16-24 year	DWP	Per year	£3,016	£2,488,200	£720,824
Youth offender, yearly average cost of a first time entrant (under 18) to the Criminal Justice System	Criminal Justice System	Per year	£21,268	£233,948	£148,876
Improved health – Workless claimant entering employment	NHS	Per year	£579	£477,675	£214,230
<b>Total</b>				<b>£6,935,423</b>	<b>£2,166,122</b>

Walsall Works has therefore been able to generate

a saving of **£2,166,122**

across different



**Government Agencies**

Cost/Saving Category	Agency generating income	Unit	Estimated Income	Benefit as a result of Walsall Works
National Insurance and Tax contributions based on Walsall Works hourly rates	HM Treasury	Per year for 18-20 year old	£346	£75,082
		Per year for 21-24 year old	£1,280	£134,400
Apprenticeship Level 2 qualification	HM Treasury	Per person per year	£836	£307,648
Apprenticeship Level 3 qualification	HM Treasury	Per person per year	£1,391	£127,972
<b>Total</b>				<b>£645,102</b>

Young people on the Walsall Works Programme have contributed £645,102 to the treasury

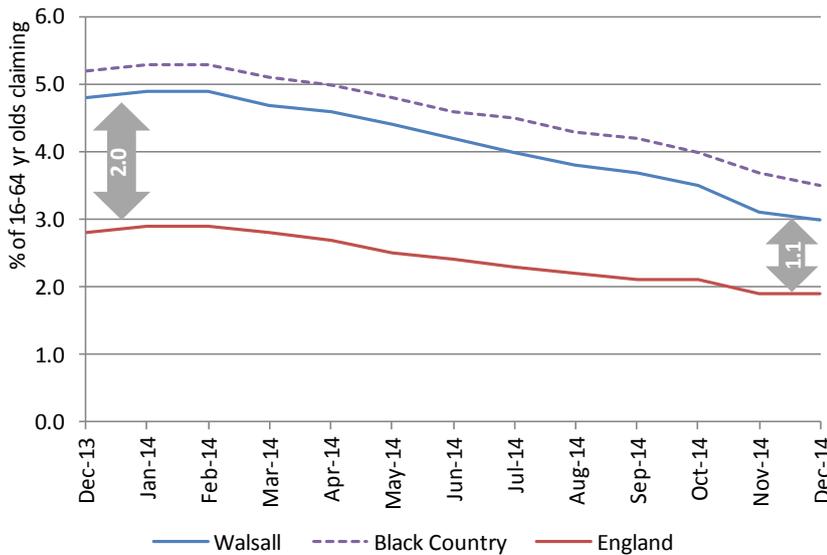


This is as a result of being in paid employment and by completing their qualifications. The figures do not take into account the increased productivity and output levels as a result of employing apprentices at a local level, however the Centre for Economics and Business Research have estimated that nationally employers gain in the long and short term from taking on an apprentice, estimating increased outputs for businesses of £1.8 billion in 2012-13.

# Tackling Youth Unemployment

Our intelligence gathering demonstrates there have been significant reductions in the total number of Jobseeker Allowance claimants in Walsall. The rate across England has also been decreasing but the current rate for Walsall shows the borough is closing the gap with England and the current gap stands at only 1.1%. The trajectory shows a closing of the gap with national averages shown below.

JSA claimant rate, Dec 2013 – Dec 2014



Walsall Works



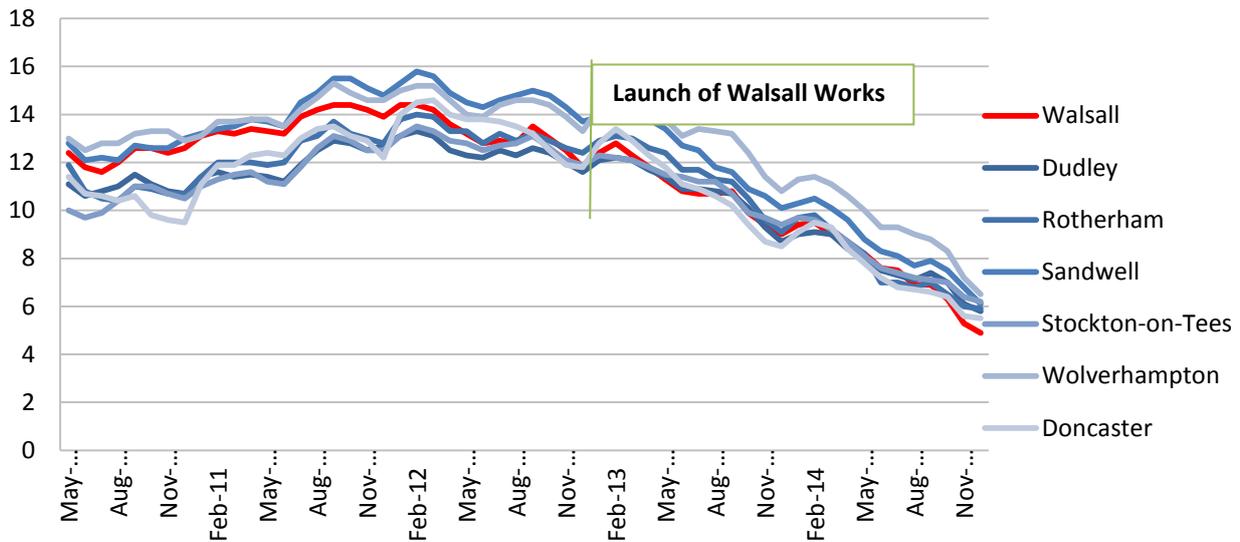
Nikkita Mai (17)  
Supported by Walsall Works  
now a  
Dance Co-ordinator  
YDC Dance Studio

The JSA claimant count as at December 2014 shows that Walsall now has the lowest rate of young jobseeker claimants in the Black Country sub region, with the current rate in Walsall standing at a record 4.9% compared to 5.8% in the Black Country and 2.9% in England.

Walsall borough has dropped disproportionately to other Black Country local authorities and at a higher rate of improvement. Walsall's rate of improvement is **4.3% (1,590 less young jobseeker claimants)** compared to an average **3.7%** rate of improvement in the Black Country which equates to a **1,257** average per borough area.

There is a direct correlation between the volumes of young people entering our Pre-Apprenticeship and Full Apprenticeship programmes with the reduction of young jobseekers on the Jobseeker Claimant Count month on month. Therefore Walsall Works has had a direct impact on the improvements in Youth Unemployment for the Borough and reducing the number of young people who are not in education, training or employment (NEET).

Walsall has also seen greater improvements in young claimants in comparison to our statistical neighbours as illustrated in the graph below:



## The Future

Two and half years on, Walsall Works is a brand that is recognised and trusted by young people. We work closely with schools and youth clubs to provide advice and guidance about alternative vocational pathways for life after school. We regularly attend careers fairs and school assembly to promote apprenticeships and other learning pathways in order to inform young people about Walsall’s employment landscape.

We work closely with our vulnerable young people i.e. ex-offenders, looked after children, teenage parents, those with learning and physical disabilities and have recently secured funding from DWP to run a Work Club for our looked after children that are transitioning out of the care system and into independence. Care leavers are a group of young people that require targeted assistance as some may have suffered instability and trauma in their early years and often have less support leading to extreme difficulties in adulthood. Care leavers are roughly twice as likely to be NEET at 19 in comparison to their peers. The programme has had several successes in placing this target group into work placements, jobs and training.

We have also secured commitment from Public Health to provide financial support to Walsall Works as we have demonstrated that periods of unemployment are harmful for physical and mental health. Supporting young people to become economically active can prevent the call on health services especially in the areas of mental health referrals, substance misuse, specialist health screenings i.e. diabetes, high blood pressure, obesity, weight management, infant mortality, and hospital admissions i.e. teenage pregnancy, self harming, poor general health.

*Walsall Works*



*Kimberley Hull and Son  
Supported by Walsall Works  
As a Pre-Apprentice  
Now a  
Social Action Project Worker  
Catch 22  
National Care Advisory Service*

Signs of economic growth are also beginning to show in Walsall and this has resulted in more confidence in sites and developments. We liaise closely with developer, procurers and main contractors to secure opportunities and working with existing employers.



Image and text removed after receiving a request under Article 17 of the General Data Protection Regulations

Walsall Works has successfully contributed to the Black Country City Deal with an ask of driving up apprenticeships in high value manufacturing. We are now looking to secure funding through the new Local Growth Fund and new European Social Funds to continue and expand the Walsall Works programme. The next phase for further development of the programme is to expand the Walsall Works programme to match local people of all ages to local job vacancies.

*Walsall Works*



*Paul Linton*

Paul Linton, Chairman of the LEP Employment and Skills Board and Deputy to the MD at Huf UK, said:

*"We need to develop our education systems and training to ensure our young people are at the cutting edge of technology across the manufacturing and engineering sector. Projects like this are leading the way in addressing the skills gap in order to ensure we continue to make products in the Black Country that are sold around the world for years to come."*

**CAREER YOUNG PEOPLE**  
**APPRENTICESHIPS EMPLOYERS**  
**FUTURE**

**REAL JOBS**  
**BUSINESS SKILLS**

**LEARN EARN**  
**WORK EXPERIENCE**  
**QUALIFICATIONS**