

WALSALL FOR ALL

Evaluation Report

An introduction



About the report

The Walsall for All evaluation report sets out the key achievements and activity of the programme since it began in January 2019. It also outlines recommendations on what needs to happen moving forward. Below are some of the key headlines summarised from the report.

About the programme

Walsall for All is a programme of activities intended to create long-term positive changes in and amongst communities across all of Walsall's localities. Walsall was one of five local authorities supported by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), previously known as MHCLG as part of its [Integrated Communities Strategy](#).

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

In order to achieve this vision, [the strategy](#) sets out a range of projects and activities designed to support each of the four priority areas set out below:

Connecting across communities - a vibrant and diverse place where people come together around what they have in common and form meaningful friendships.

Young people learning and growing together - young people in Walsall have diverse friendships and understanding and acceptance of all. They have the confidence and aspiration to fulfil their potential and are empowered to take social action and make a positive difference in Walsall.

Working and contributing together - everyone has the fair opportunity to contribute to Walsall through meaningful work or volunteering. Everyone should be able to speak English to access these opportunities.

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

Key headlines

Connecting across communities proved to be the strongest and most comprehensive priority. From the Pledge, instilling common standards of inclusivity across the sector, to Places of Welcome and innovation projects, it generated new physical spaces and ideas. Community research helped us gain insights into barriers and lived experiences of our residents and think about solutions. Despite the impact of COVID, most projects recovered or found new ways of engaging (such as online platforms or undertaking COVID emergency response work).

With our **Young People Learning and Growing Together** priority, Walsall was encouraged to focus on young people by the national Integration Area Programme. Projects in this area primarily focused on giving young people a voice and a pathway into social action and positive activity. Engagement with schools was also a focus, incorporating the School Linking Programme, UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools and delivery of a new project, Walsall Arts for All.

Whilst the above priorities focused on changing the organisations, physical spaces and networking activities, the **Working and Contributing Together** priority has been most focused on individuals experiencing barriers and the role of education and employers in supporting these individuals. From ESOL (English Speakers of Other Languages) in the community to empowering women sessions, as well as supporting the vulnerable groups into workplace (Walsall Works), the virtual Walsall Workplace Diversity Conference came just in time to sum up the borough-wide aspirations in this area and create a model for the future.

Living Together has been the most ambitious priority in terms of developing a better understanding of segregation and tensions affecting our neighbourhoods. Before Walsall for All started, some complex themes had not been treated as equally important in different localities, yet, through dialogue, they have started to gain more attention. These include integration of migrants, understanding needs of Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities and social and emotional cost of hate crime.



Communications and Engagement

A report focused on the communications and engagement work of Walsall for All is available to read separately. This report discusses how the Walsall for All communications has raised awareness of the programme, its priorities and the brand, becoming a leader in sharing information for the community and voluntary sector, and for the wider borough.

Our legacy

The main legacy of Walsall for All will be its **distinctive delivery model**. This model is based on commissioning open to diverse inputs, creativity and local geographical sensitivities, with social mixing in mind. The innovation projects in particular attracted smaller or new voluntary and community sector providers with no previous experience of bidding. They were valued for their 'lived experiences' and creativity. This drive, combined with some of the larger community assets, such as community associations, maximised the learning about what really matters in social integration across Walsall. Many of the localities previously assessed as 'integration cold spots' became hosts of the important conversations, for example Pelsall and Brownhills in relation to hate crime or the Community Dialogue scheme. This approach is highly valued in the metropolitan areas at risk of segregation.

As the review by Publicus in 2020 confirmed, this model had been supported by a **team of change-makers** who did not only act as commissioners but also as catalysts for networking, coaching and shared learning across the borough. To retain this distinctive delivery model with similar commitment to learning, the future Walsall for All will have to constitute itself as a stronger strategic partnership with its own status and governance, independent of DHLUC (former MHCLG) and Walsall Council. This will create an opportunity to incorporate some of the existing change-makers into the operational make-up of the organisation and enhance the existing assets.

To download the reports in full, visit www.walsallforall.co.uk/evaluation





WALSALL FOR ALL

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