

Walsall for All Partnership Board Meeting

Date: 8th September 2021

Time: 16:30 - 18:30

Venue: Microsoft Teams

Welcome & Introduction

David Primrose welcomed board members to the online meeting.

There were a number of visitors who joined:

- Lisa Binns-Sykes is from MHCLG, working on the ESOL team part of the integration team. She previously worked on Community Champions and has seen some information on the website about Walsall for All.
- Vicky Green is the new Customer Engagement and Inclusion Manager at whg, leading on the strategy approach for Walsall in how we encourage residents to have their voice heard and encourage better engagement. She has seen information about the different groups running projects in Walsall for All.
- Karen Jackson is Director of Social Care for Adults at Walsall Council. She attended in place of Kerrie. She had a briefing from Irena about the work happening and has seen lots of different information and exciting projects happening. As a social worker, communities are important and there is a real opportunity to strengthen people and empower residents.
- There were two guests present, Suzanne and Teodora. They were introduced in the COVID-19 Community Champions agenda item.

There were no matters arising and no declarations of interest.

COVID-19 Community Champions

Zara Khan presented this section of the meeting.

- The purpose of the Covid Community Champions Project was to ensure communities and residents of Walsall have the correct information around Covid and the vaccine to make informed decisions.
- 14 groups are involved in the project; Mind Kind have completed their project and are now supporting Oak Tree Trust with their project.
- A lot of activity on social media, including podcasts from Aaina Community Hub and Mind Kind, a women's only sessions organised by Aisha Mosque to improve vaccine confidence in Urdu and English, links with local churches to encourage testimonies on Covid-19, drop-in sessions organised by Oak Tree Trust for local communities to ask questions about Covid, vaccinations and mental health.
- Some notable highlights from the projects include Vera Group, where one of the Community Champions joined the project after successfully completing

ESOL classes with the organisation and wanted to help others and make a difference in the local community. Zebra Access work with the deaf community and have produced BSL videos on their top 10 key messages.

- Surveys will be completed by the Community Champions to see what can be done to strategically help Black African/Caribbean and South Asian and younger communities take up the vaccination, as data has shown it has plateaued slightly.
- MHCLG have agreed for Walsall for All to continue the Covid Community Champions project up until March 2022.
- Case studies were provided by Teodora from Vera Group and Suzanne from The Motivation Hub, who provided positive experiences and benefits from the Covid Community Champions project.

Vaccination Buses

- 3 vaccination buses have been deployed in over 120 locations within the borough, which has been 2,800 vaccinations in the last 10 weeks.
- The focus for August/September is to do an 8-week follow up visit; locations have been confirmed up until mid-October.
- There has been a 2-week deployment at Walsall College, which has seen to over 38 vaccinations so far. It is predicted this figure will reach near to a couple of hundred.
- There are no plans to put on vaccination buses for under 18s due to governance and safeguarding issues.
- 16-17 year olds are encouraged to get vaccinated at the Saddlers or any other static vaccination sites. Saddlers has started to vaccinate 12-15 year olds, who are clinically extremely vulnerable.

Responses to questions asked by board members included:

- The project needs to be mindful of not specifying which groups are being targeted, as to not make them feel demonised or at fault.
- Teodora confirmed that IAG around benefits and access to welfare to support was provided.
- Geraint Griffiths (CCG Managing Director for Walsall) thanked all the groups for their hard work, which has resulted in high vaccination rates in Walsall.
- Vicky praised the success of vaccination buses. In regard to the 'anti-vaxxers', there have been cases of verbal abuse and the police have had to be called. In this instance, to not engage with them and call the police if the situation escalates.
- Lisa said it was positive to see the success of the Covid Community project.

Community Researchers

Charlotte Gough presented this section of the meeting and the next item on Belong Network.

- The Community Research Programme has been pushed back due to the impact of Covid, which has resulted in a significant loss of researchers to 4 from 20.
- So far, the report shows that positive relationships have been built with neighbours, community leads identified playing a key role in developing integration and cohesion, as well as breaking down barriers.
- The key recommendations that came about were around supporting ESOL programmes to continue running by communities, residents are given a voice, spaces to come together and short term to long term funding to grow is made available.
- Community tensions and divisions section of the report needs to highlight the experience of hate crime incidents are not being reported.
- David asked Charlotte to respond to the University of Birmingham (along with other feedback) to ensure that the recommendations are evidence-based and robust rather than lean on what we believe is true.

Belong Network

- Belong Network (Cohesion and Integration Network) is delivering a major research project called *Beyond Us and Them*, which looks at the impact of Covid on social cohesion. This project is in partnership with the University of Kent funded by Nuffield Foundation.
- Key headlines from the *Community Connection and Cohesion during Covid* report has revealed that trust has been stronger at a local level than a national level. Walsall has remained more cohesive than elsewhere, which has led to more connectedness, community relations, high levels of social action and community engagement.
- The *Public Perceptions of the UK and Local Government* report revealed differing results and opinions. 51.6% felt that communications from UK Local Government lacks honesty and credibility.
- A place-based membership with Belong Network requires key partners to be involved, which is something for everyone to consider.

Walsall for All programme update

Videos shown on [Building Closer Communities in Walsall Highlights](#) and [Jack and Teresa's Story on Hate Crime](#).

Some of the highlights of Walsall for All include:

- 30 deaf awareness licenses for individuals to complete.
- The launching of the Welcome Pack will be made available in September onwards in different languages.
- DWP project - workshops are still taking place and attendance has been brilliant.

- A diversity conference took place in the summer, bringing together businesses across Walsall and beyond.
- Over 2,000 learners have participated in the ESOL provisions.
- 30 schools are part of the School Linking with 14 schools linked. This project has been put on hold but there are plans to readvertise this again.
- 14 schools have signed up to partake in Walsall Arts for All to promote integration and cohesion.
- Strong relationships have been built with the GTR community/proposed Pleck transit site, where local groups and Friends of GTR will be doing some awareness sessions.
- Hate Crime videos are ready to be promoted.
- Some highlights from a comms perspective have seen to 10k hits on anything related to the vaccination buses. Thousands of hits on Women Empowerment Coffee Mornings.
- Places of Welcome have reopened in 7 venues with concept of getting to know their communities and connect after being in isolation for so long.

An evaluation report is being organised, reflecting on the work through the four providers and the work of over 20 providers. She has asked the board to suggest questions or themes they would like to see in the report.

Claire asked how well targets were met and if we can highlight where value was added.

Karen asked how projects have become self-sustained. How we promote awareness of these groups.

At this point, Ibrahim was thanked for his contribution to the board. He is grateful to share his experience and the opportunities he was given.

Dee asked if One Walsall can do anything now to bring other funding or to work for more collaborative bids.

Gerry mentioned how proud of what has been achieved so far.

Irena is happy to look at the 'equity' aspect as part of the report.

Future of Walsall for All

In previous meetings, the future of Walsall for All has been an ongoing subject. An additional meeting has been proposed for 1st December to 'unwind' the formalities of the board.

Irena mentioned that we started Walsall for All with certain logic models. It would be hard to compare that parameter when we have spent time on different logic models, which has changed over time. However, we can evaluate from where we have started.

Paul Gordon will give more information on the report and proposals moving forward.

Any other business

- Aisha Khan raised concerns around the sustainability around community based ESOL learning. This is something that will be picked up in a separate discussion with Irena and Dee.
- Walsall College Open Day at Pleck Library on 25th September 2021, where community learning ESOL will be delivered from that venue.

Dates of the next board meeting

All meetings will be online, taking place on a Wednesday from 4.30pm to 6.30pm.

- 1st December 2021

In attendance were:

A'isha Khan (Aaina Community Hub)

Charlotte Gough (Community, Equality and Cohesion, Walsall Council)

Claire Wills (Black Country Impact – Walsall Council)

Deb Rajania (Walsall College)

Dee Lytton (One Walsall)

Geraint Griffiths (NHS Black Country and West Birmingham CCG)

Gerry Lyng (DWP)

Ibrahim Sohail (Youth of Walsall)

Irena Hergottova (Community, Equality and Cohesion, Walsall Council)

Karen Jackson (Adult Social Care, Walsall Council)

Jamie Hobday (West Midlands Police)

Lisa Binns-Sykes (MHCLG)

Vicky Green (whg)

Zara Khan (Community, Equality and Cohesion, Walsall Council)

Guests:

Suzanne Sant (The Motivation Hub)

Teodora Albu (Vera Group)

Apologies:

Fay Shanahan (whg)

Julie Haywood (whg)

Kerrie Allward (Adult Social Care, Walsall Council)

Lisa Goodson (University of Birmingham)

Lyndon Campbell (whg)

Maureen Lewis (Walsall Black Sisters Collective)

Paul Gordon (Resilient Communities, Walsall Council)