

## Chapter 1 Background to Walsall

The opening chapter of the JSNA describes the 'golden threads' of the background to Walsall and sets the scene for the chapters that follow. Overall wellbeing is determined by a range of things:

- *A healthy body*
- *A healthy mind – emotions, reason, imagination, positive self-esteem, emotional resilience, problem-solving skills, freedom from fear*
- *A safe and secure place to live – home safety, freedom from violence or fear of it*
- *Enough money to live on*
- *Nurturing relationships – family friends, community, a sense of belonging*
- *Purposeful activity and valued achievements – learning, working, volunteering, relaxing*

All of these are influenced by the circumstances in which people are born and progress through life. Deprivation and poverty in childhood rest at the heart of inequalities in wellbeing throughout life.

Individual chapters of the JSNA discuss contributors to wellbeing across the life course. The ultimate outcome of these contributors to inequalities in wellbeing is life expectancy. A better outcome measure is healthy life expectancy. A core outcome of the JSNA and subsequent Health and Wellbeing Strategy should be to narrow the gap between life expectancy and healthy life expectancy by:

- *Extending the period of time that people in Walsall experience good health and wellbeing*
- *Reducing the period of time that people in Walsall experience poor health and wellbeing*

This chapter introduces these key determinants and outcomes of inequalities in wellbeing across the borough.