

4.8 Chapter summary and key priorities for action

The chapter introduction indicated key areas of concern for Walsall and the paragraphs that followed highlighted examples of good practice and ongoing initiatives.

Key Priorities for action:

Employment and employability will remain an ongoing challenge in the forthcoming years for Walsall. We must work in partnership across the statutory, independent and voluntary/community sector to provide the focus necessary to:

- *Recognise the medium and long term impact in terms of physical and mental health, as well as economic outcomes, that unemployment has on people and ensure that, in a period of limited resources, there continues to be joined up thinking, strategic commitment and targeted action to reduce unemployment in the borough*
- *Ensure that in seeking solutions to the challenges we face, we recognise the unique nature of some of those challenges in Walsall and seek to be creative and innovative in our approaches as well as employ evidence-based good practice that is working elsewhere*
- *Ensure that necessary courses and training is available to local residents, especially young people, to enable them to improve their skill levels and qualifications in order to access job vacancies and gain employment*
- *Ensure that the public, independent and voluntary/community sectors in Walsall work together to provide a wide variety of opportunities for employment support and volunteering, acting as role models and exemplars for others*
- *Increase the availability of jobs in the borough requiring the full range of qualifications and skills*
- *Develop greater diversity of choice for learning, training and employment for young people (see Appendix 3, CYP Plan Priority 4)*
- *Supporting the transition into adulthood for children and young people with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities by creating single 'through life' plans (see Appendix 3, CYP Plan Priority 5)*
- *Ensure we understand the needs of our most vulnerable and disadvantaged residents and recognise that other needs may need to be met before an individual is ready to seek employment*
- *Understand the nature and complexity of the barriers that local people face when trying to access work and the effect on the individual and dependent family members, especially children*
- *Identify resources to remove or reduce barriers to work and support local people to gain the necessary knowledge, skills and confidence to overcome them, particularly those posed by physical and mental ill health and inexperience due to age*
- *Provide incentives to employers and schemes that enable our most disadvantaged residents to enter and sustain employment*

- *Promote the role of employers in maintaining and improving employee health through healthy workplace programmes and by identifying and tackling work place accidents/occupational disease*
- *Provide support to Walsall businesses to ensure compliance with legal requirements to ensure that they are competitive, able to thrive, create an environment for confident consumers and thus be able to create employment opportunities*
- *Develop and implement a comprehensive set of programmes that equip local service providers, particularly within the Health & Social Care Sector, with the knowledge and skills required to maximise the health of those they provide services for, as well as their own workforce.*
- *Develop and implement a comprehensive set of Learning & Development programmes that equips local people with the skills and abilities demanded by the Health & Care sector, so they are able to compete for and secure employment.*
- *Identify and work with key agencies (Health Education England / West Midlands, etc.) to seek out opportunities for joint working and support in the development of new approaches and ways of working, together with funding and joint delivery etc.*
- *Explore and utilise any available external funding (European, Lottery etc.) to support local people into training and employment.*