

Walsall

Worklessness Assessment

July 2011



Walsall Council

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Introducing Worklessness

Economic development has a fundamental role in reducing disparities between regions by creating economic growth, competitiveness, knowledge transfer, innovation and improving productivity at a local level. For many decades economic development functions have been established to tackle economic issues facing localities such as industrial decline, deprivation, social exclusion, skills shortages, unemployment and more recently tackling worklessness.

Policy changes have resulted in economic development focusing not only on creating prosperity through job creation but also on reducing unemployment and tackling worklessness. This has resulted in worklessness now being high on the political agenda, further exacerbated by the onset of the economic downturn in late 2008, when unemployment levels began to rise due to the country being hit by a global recession.

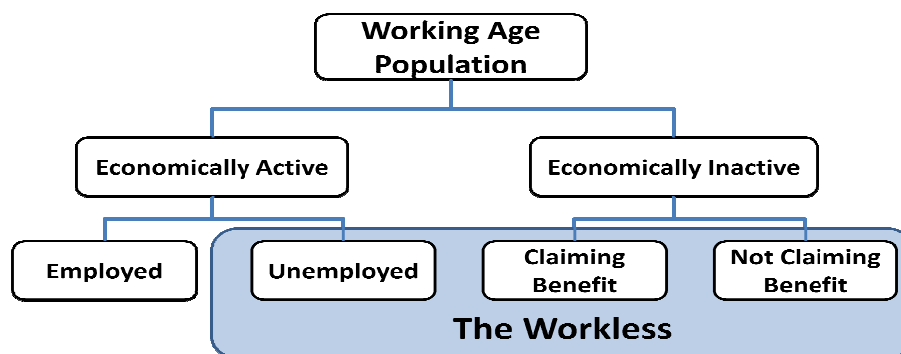
Defining Worklessness

Worklessness is more than just unemployment. The term 'Worklessness' has been in use since 2004 when it was first identified by the Social Exclusion Unit. It widened the concept of unemployment to encompass a wider analysis of the nature and cause of those who are unemployed, particularly the intractable problem of long term unemployment. Unemployment has been defined by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) who gathers information from people about their current economic status and job search activity. The ILO measures unemployment in terms of all those who are out of work and actively looking for work.

Worklessness, as defined by the Social Exclusion Unit, is 'all those males and females of working age (aged 16-64) who are not employed', including those that people who are and those who are not seeking work. This category includes everyone who is without a job, who is classed as economically inactive (i.e. people of working age who are not working, not in full-time education or training and not actively seeking work). This extends it to some people who may have also voluntarily withdrawn their labour from the market for other reasons i.e. family responsibilities, early retirement.

The workless population therefore includes the economically inactive as well those who are economically active but unemployed.

Labour market groups



Economically Active is those employed and those unemployed (seeking and available for work).

Economically Inactive is those claiming benefits those seeking but not currently able to enter employment, those who are unable to work through poor health, those who choose not to work for personal reasons. It may also include part time students and those not claiming benefits.

Worklessness in Walsall

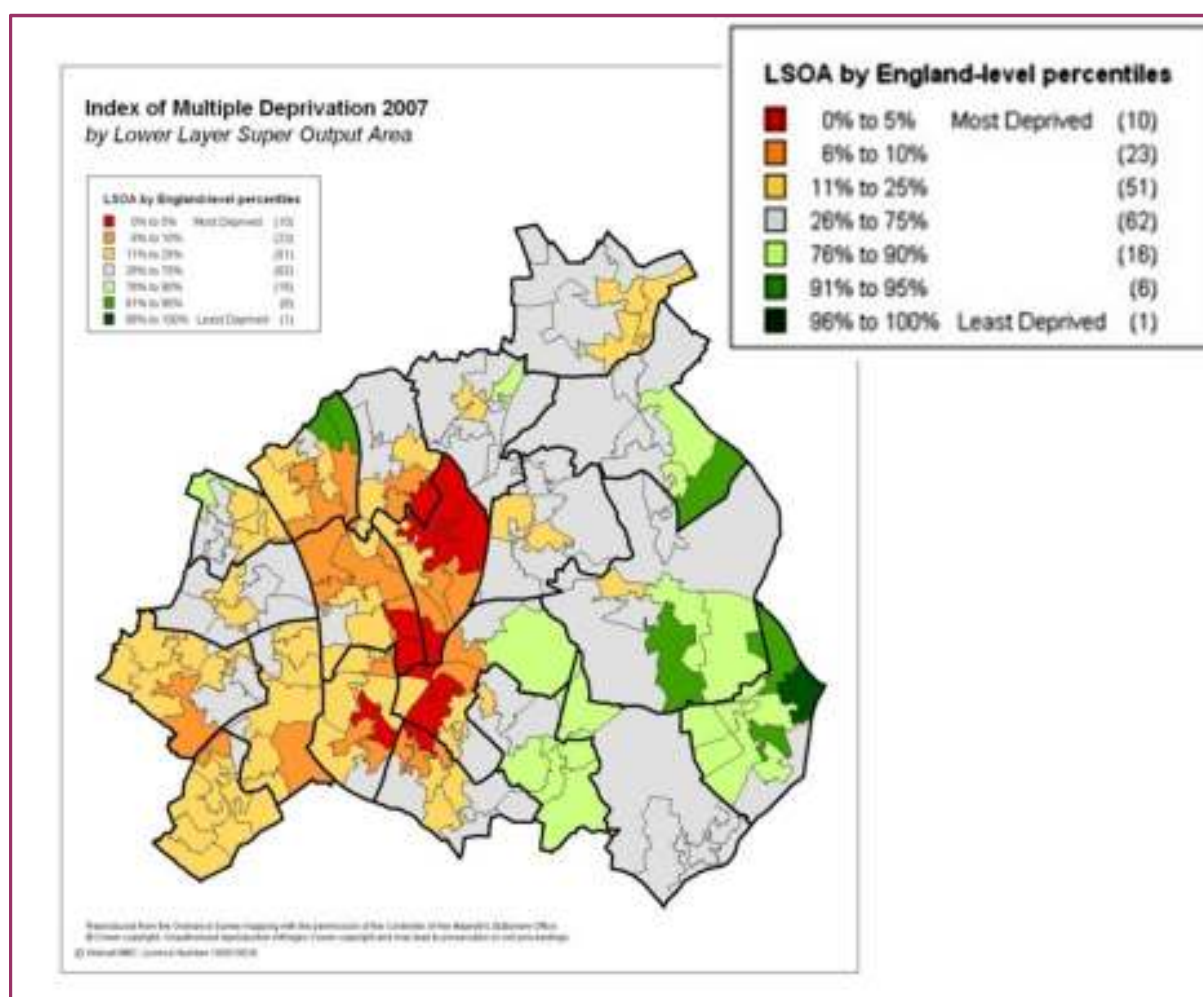
Worklessness in Walsall has been consistently above the national and regional average, and is persistent because there are areas where there is a combination of the particular factors in terms of people and place that are thought to result in high levels of worklessness.

Walsall faces a major challenge in reducing worklessness and increasing the employment rate of local residents to a level which matches the regional and national averages. In terms of unemployment and economic activity Walsall lags behind the region and the national situation.

Deprivation

According to the 2007 Index of Multiple Deprivation, the Government's official measure of multiple deprivation at small area levels, Walsall was ranked as the 45th most deprived English local authority (out of 354), making it amongst the worst performing 13% of districts. This is a slightly worse position than it held in the 2004 Index, when it ranked 61st. It is also the 4th most deprived authority in the West Midlands (out of 34). In terms of employment deprivation, Walsall ranked even more poorly, and was 34th and in the 10% of most deprived local authority districts. It should be noted that this change in rank does not necessarily mean that the borough has become more deprived in absolute terms; rather it could mean that Walsall has become more deprived relative to other areas of the country.

Map 1 - Deprivation in Walsall



In addition to borough profile, 32,482 small areas known as Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) are ranked on seven different themes including income, employment and health. Areas ranked between 1 and 3,248 are in the 10% most deprived areas in England, areas between 1 and 6,496 are in the 20% most deprived areas in England. In terms of overall deprivation one fifth of Walsall's LSOAs are in the 10% most deprived areas in the country and 42% are in the 20% most deprived. Similarly in the Income theme one fifth of Walsall's LSOAs are in the 10% most deprived areas in England whilst 46% are in the 20% most deprived areas in the Country. The highest levels of deprivation are recorded in the Education, Skills and Training theme one third of areas in the borough are in the 10% most deprived areas in England and 55% of the areas in Walsall are in the 20% most deprived areas in the country.

However, this overall position hides the significant variation across the borough (as shown in the map). There is a noticeable divide in Walsall, broadly splitting the borough into more affluent wards in the east and more deprived wards in the west. Parts of Blakenall, Birchills Leamore, St Matthew's and Pleck are amongst the 10% most deprived areas in the country, while parts of Streetly and Aldridge are in the 10% least deprived. In Bloxwich, neighbourhoods in the most and least deprived in the country are adjacent to one another. This shows that Walsall's most deprived wards mirror those areas where there are high levels of worklessness.

Modelling to much smaller Output Areas pinpointed severe pockets of deprivation at small area level in the borough, in neighbourhoods that were not particularly deprived overall. This suggests that even in more 'affluent' parts of the borough there may be certain estates or streets suffering from multiple disadvantages. Notably, there are pockets of deprivation in the most affluent wards of Aldridge and Streetly.

Working Age Population

The Annual Population Survey in March 2010 report there are 156,900 residents of working age (16-64) in Walsall. As shown in Table 1 this includes 99,200 residents in employment, 14,900 unemployed and seeking work and 42,800 economically inactive. In comparison to the regional and national average, this shows Walsall has lower levels of employed, higher levels of unemployment and more economically inactive people out of work.

Table 1- Working Age Population

Working Age Population March 2010					
	Walsall	Black Country		W Midlands	England
	No.	% of working age population			
Employed	99,200	63.2	63.7	68.5	70.5
Unemployed	14,900	9.5	9.7	7.1	6.2
Economically Inactive	42,800	27.3	26.6	24.4	23.4
Total	156,900	100	100	100	100

Source: Annual Population Survey 2010

Workless Population

Based on the Annual Population Survey, in March 2010 Walsall had 57,700 residents who were workless across the various labour market groups and this includes:

- Around 14,900 residents - almost a tenth of the working age population (9.5%) - are the unemployed economically active (compared to 9.7% in the Black Country, 7.1% regionally and 6.2% nationally). Of these only 10,810 are claiming Jobseekers Allowance; and

- Around 42,800 residents – over a quarter of the working age population (27.3%) are economically inactive (compared to 26.6% in the Black Country, 24.4% regionally and 23.4% nationally), and while 11,700 of these would like a job, the majority (31,100) do not want to work due to having a care responsibilities or health related barriers.

These differences and disparities across sub region make a considerable difference to the economic well being of communities in Walsall. While current economic conditions make reducing worklessness more difficult than ever, Walsall needs to increase the number of households with one or more income earners.

There are a number of reasons why worklessness is high, including both demand issues – too few jobs available for local people to access, and supply side – too many people with insufficient skills to secure employment. Moreover, low income or worklessness in Walsall is also strongly correlated with poor health, child poverty, crime and lower levels of educational achievement which creates a vicious cycle that needs to be tackled. There is also a close relationship between child poverty, intergenerational unemployment and illiteracy in the borough.

Table 2 shows in March 2010, 57,700 residents in Walsall are workless, accounting for over a third (37%) of the working age population. This is largely in line with the Black Country as a whole (36%) but much higher than regional (32%) and national levels (30%).

Table 2 – Workless Population

Workless Population March 2010

	Walsall		Black Country	W Midlands	England
	No.		% of working age population		
Workless	57,700	36.8	36.3	31.5	29.6
Employed	99,200	63.2	63.7	68.5	70.5
Total	156,900	100	100	100	100

Source: Annual Population Survey 2010

Each of the workless groups (unemployed and inactive) is discussed in turn in the following sections. This includes details on sub-groups and analysis of the demographic characteristics of the residents within each cohort, identifying key target groups and specific barriers to entering employment.

This is followed by section on each of the main unemployment and income related benefits, which is effectively sub-groups of the workless population which are eligible for benefits distributed by the Department for Work and Pensions. This data is available at a lower geographical level (ward and Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA)) and allows target areas to be identified.

Workless Households

The most recent data in 2009 assessing the level of worklessness within households showed that in Walsall there were 18,000 households with at least one adult of working age claiming out of work benefits. This is significantly higher proportion at 24.2% than the regional average at 20%. Of those completely workless households in Walsall 7,000 had dependent children and 4,000 of these were lone parent households. Within those households that were completely workless, there were 27,000 adults residing with 15,000 dependent children aged 0-16 or 16-18 if in full time education. This data shows that Walsall had a higher rate of households, people and children living in completely workless households in 2009 than the regional and national figures and this has generally been the case in every year of available data from 2004-9. It is important to note that nearly a quarter of all Walsall households (24.2%) were occupied by at least one working age person who was workless and yet there was greater proportion (28.5%) of these households with dependent children. This

suggests that these children would have no or little contact with the world of work whilst growing up. It is important to note, that of those workless households with dependent children more than half (57.1%) of those were lone parent households which shows that Walsall has a much greater than national average number of children living in poverty.

Table 3 – Workless Households

Workless Households 2009

	Households		People		Children	
	2009	%	2009	%	2009	%
Walsall	18,000	24.2	27,000	17.4	15,000	28.5
West Midlands	348,000	20.0	507,000	14.8	210,000	20.2
England	3,085,000	18.1	4,374,000	13.1	1,589,000	16.4

Source: Annual Population Survey

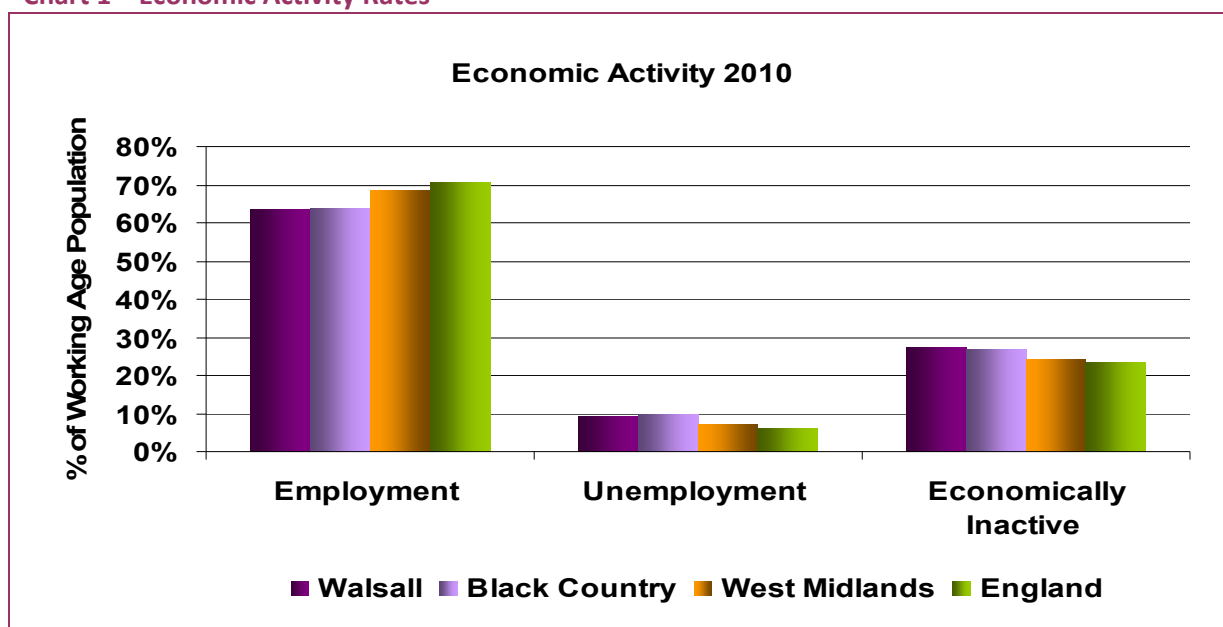
Worklessness Summary

- Walsall is ranked 34th in the most deprived local authority areas on employment deprivation
- Walsall has 156,900 residents of working age of which are 14,900 are unemployed and 42,800 are economically inactive
- There are 18,000 households with at least one adult claiming benefits in Walsall and there 15,000 dependent children residing in this homes.

Economic Activity

The economically active are those employed and those unemployed (seeking and/or available for work). In Walsall, 99,200 are currently employed and 14,900 are unemployed.

Chart 1 – Economic Activity Rates



Source: APS March 2010

Employment Rate

The Annual Population Survey estimates that around 99,200 of the Borough's residents are in employment, both within Walsall and in other areas. Employment levels in the Borough are considerably lower than the regional and national average with less than two thirds of the working age population (63.2%) in employment in comparison to 68.5% in the West Midlands and 70.5% in

England. An additional 8,200 residents would need to enter employment to reach regional levels and the number increases to over 11,000 when considering national levels.

Job Density

An important consideration is the number and availability of jobs to local residents living in Walsall borough, and the fact that the job density is consistently decreasing since 2004. This is in contrast to the Black Country which has maintained its jobs density over the same period, as has the West Midlands and England figures. The job density measure indicates the number of jobs per working age resident where a job density of 1.0 would indicate there is one job per resident of working age in the borough. Since the number for Walsall is around 0.71 (2008 – latest data available), this suggests that:

- Not all of the jobs in Walsall are held by residents and residents also work outside Walsall
- The West Midlands region does not have enough jobs for all of their working age population
- By comparison some areas such as North Warwickshire and Stratford-on-Avon have a surplus of jobs with densities of 1.06 and 1.01 respectively.

Table 3 – Job Density

Date	Walsall		Black Country		West Midlands		England	
	Total Jobs	Job Density	Total Jobs	Job Density	Total Jobs	Job Density	Total Jobs	Job Density
2002	113,000	0.72	506,000	0.75	2,616,000	0.78	25,628,000	0.80
2003	112,000	0.71	501,000	0.74	2,636,000	0.78	25,838,000	0.80
2004	119,000	0.76	499,000	0.74	2,661,000	0.78	26,050,000	0.80
2005	117,000	0.74	508,000	0.75	2,691,000	0.79	26,478,000	0.81
2006	115,000	0.73	510,000	0.75	2,694,000	0.79	26,307,000	0.80
2007	115,000	0.73	510,000	0.75	2,674,000	0.78	26,606,000	0.80
2008	112,000	0.71	501,000	0.73	2,666,000	0.77	26,611,000	0.79

Source: ONS – Job Density

Total jobs are a workplace-based measure of jobs. The number of jobs in an area is composed of jobs done by residents (of any age) and jobs done by workers (of any age) who commute into the area. Jobs density is the numbers of jobs per resident aged 16-64. For example, a job density of 1.0 would mean that there is one job for every resident of working age.

Employment Summary

- There are 99,200 residents of working age who are employed in the borough or other areas.
- The largest employing sector is still manufacturing but this is forecasted to reduce further.
- Growth sectors include the public sector (i.e. health and social care), business & professional services, retail, distribution, hotels and restaurants.
- Job density has reduced from 1 job per resident in 2004 to 0.7 jobs per resident in 2008.

Unemployment Rate

The unemployment levels and rates in the Annual Population Survey are measured using the International Labour Organisation definition. This covers people who are:

- Without a job, want a job, have actively sought work in the last four weeks and are available to start work in the next two weeks; or
- Out of work, have found a job and are waiting to start in the next two weeks.

It is important to note that the unemployment rate measure is different to the claimant count measure which is based solely on eligibility for benefits (i.e. Job Seekers' Allowance). This measure is

generally accepted to be a more comprehensive measure and is usually higher than the claimant count for any given period. The unemployment rate is expressed as a percentage of the economically active working age population i.e. unemployed plus employed. Economic activity and inactivity rates are expressed as a percentage of the entire working age population.

Above average unemployment has been a long term trend in Walsall, with the unemployment rate consistently above the regional and national rates. Between 2004 and 2010 there has been a more pronounced increase in the unemployment rate in the Borough (+7.2 percentage points compared to +3.5 nationally), which led to the rate more than doubling and increased the gap with the West Midlands and English average.

In March 2010, 14,900 residents were unemployed amounting to 13.1% of the economically active working age population, compared to 9.5% regionally and 8% nationally. High unemployment is a feature of the wider Black Country labour market and this has been further exacerbated by the economic downturn during 2008 as reflected in the tables below.

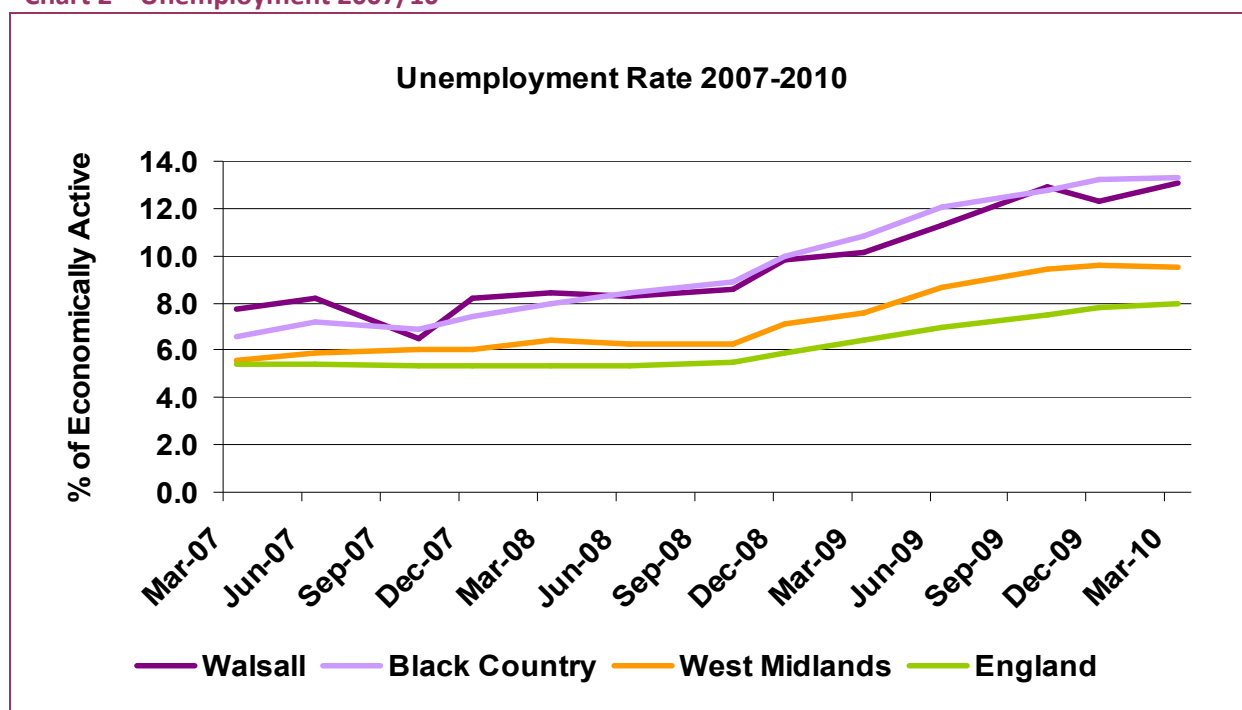
Chart 2 – Unemployment 2007/10 shows the unemployment trends over the past three years which highlight the impact of the recession, with the relatively steady unemployment rates of the 2005-2007 period beginning to increase significantly from late 2008. The Black Country saw the impact of the recession earlier but it appears to have had a more significant impact in Walsall with the unemployment rate in the Borough experiencing a greater increase than regionally and nationally.

Overall the above average increase in Walsall between 2004 and 2010 is a result of:

- A slightly higher increase than regional and national levels since 2004
- Followed by a more significant increase from late 2008 onwards.

This has led to an additional 8,200 people now unemployed compared to 2004 levels (when around 6,700 were unemployed).

Chart 2 – Unemployment 2007/10



Source: APS March 2010

Unemployment by Gender

In line with national trends there is a higher level of male, rather than female unemployment (14.3% in comparison to 11.6%). In both cases, Walsall is above the national average, and the variance in terms of male unemployment is slightly higher (14.3% (Walsall) in comparison to 9% (England)).

Table 4 – Unemployment by Gender

Unemployment Rate by Gender March 2010

	Walsall	Black Country	W. Midlands	England	
	No.	% of economically active working age population by gender			
Unemployment Rate	14,900	13.1	13.3	9.5	8.0
Male	9,000	14.3	15.4	11.3	9.0
Female	5,900	11.6	10.7	7.2	6.9

Source: Annual Population Survey March 2010

Over the past six years there has been an increase in the unemployment rate amongst both males (+7.6 percentage points) and females (+6.7 percentage points) in Walsall and in both cases the increase has been above the regional and national change. Overall male unemployment has increased by 4,800 (+114%) and female unemployment by 3,400 (+136%).

In recent years female unemployment has risen at a much faster rate than regionally and nationally. During the 2007-2010 period Walsall experienced a greater increase in the female, rather than male unemployment rate (+5.1 percentage points compared to +4.3) and the increase in the rate was more than double the average for the West Midlands (+1.5 percentage points) and England (+1.9 percentage points).

Chart 3 – Gender Change in Unemployment



Source: APS March 2010

Male Employment by Age

There is a higher rate of unemployment across all male age groups when compared to national levels. The difference is most significant for 35-49 year olds. The unemployment rate in Walsall amongst 35-49 year old males is double the national average. The unemployment rate is also above the Black County average. This age range is typically the one where employment rates are highest and many people's earnings are increasing.

Table 5 - Male Unemployment by Age**Male Unemployment Rate by Age March 2010**

Age	Walsall No.	% of economically active working age population within age cohort			
		Black Country	W. Midlands	England	
16-19	1,300	42.2	39.6	35.1	30.5
20-24	1,900	23.7	26.7	23.5	19.5
25-34	1,600	12.9	14.6	11.5	8.6
35-49	2,900	11.9	11.6	7.9	5.7
50-64	1,300	8.6	11.3	6.5	5.9

Source: Annual Population Survey

Notably, there is a greater cohort of young males aged 16-19 years who are unemployed compared to the Black Country. Whilst, lower than the Black Country, there is also a substantial cohort of young men aged 20-24 who are unemployed. In a period of falling employment, with more limited new opportunities, there is a danger of those leaving further and higher education being unable to gain the employment experience needed to capitalise on their obtained qualifications.

Female Unemployment by Age

Unlike male unemployment, Walsall has a higher female unemployment rate than the Black Country across the majority of age groups, with the only exception being those aged 50-64. In all cases the rate is significantly above the national and regional average with the greatest differences relating to those aged 16-19 and 25-34 when the female rate in Walsall is almost double the national average.

Table 6 – Female Unemployment by Age**Female Unemployment Rate by Age March 2010**

Age	Walsall No.	% of economically active working age population with age cohort			
		Black Country	W. Midlands	England	
16-19	1,300	44.3	37.7	23.4	23
20-24	1,000	17.4	16	11.4	13.1
25-34	1,000	12.5	11.1	8.1	6.9
35-49	1,900	9.6	8.4	5.7	5.4
50-64	700	4.7	5.5	3.6	3.2

Source: Annual Population Survey**Unemployment Summary**

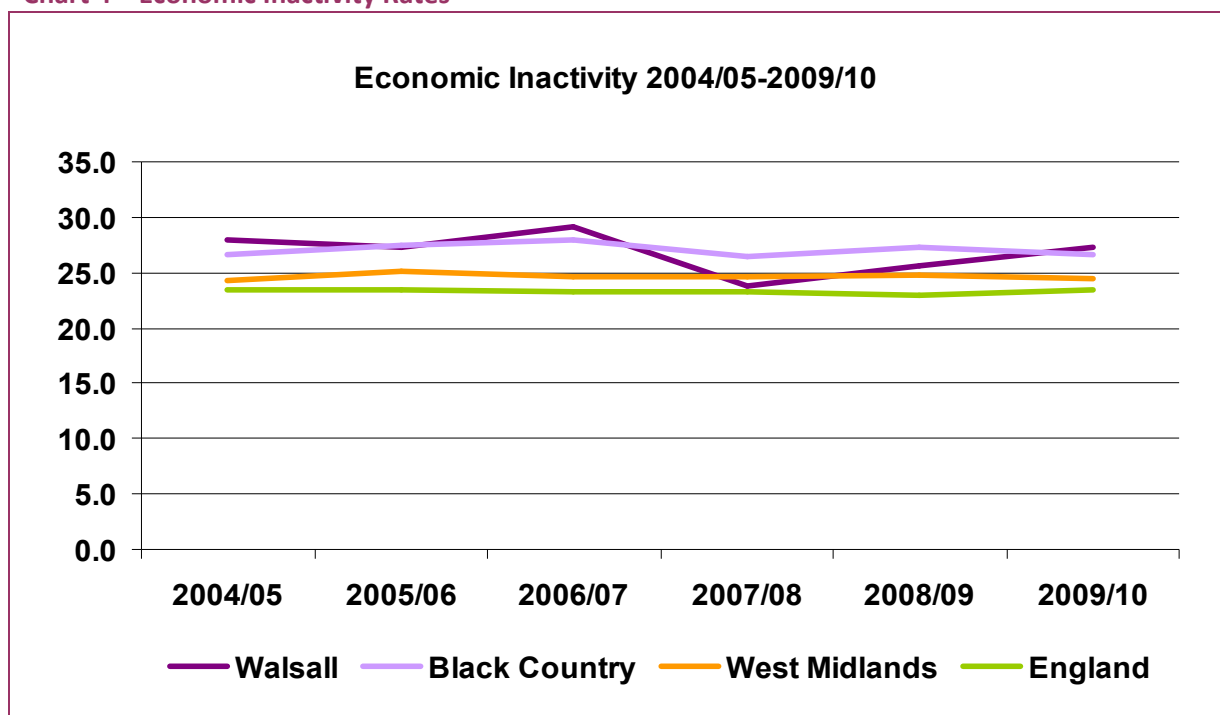
- Unemployment in Walsall has been consistently higher than regional/national average rates.
- Since 2004, it has risen faster than regionally / nationally widening the unemployment gap,
- Walsall has a higher cohort of male unemployment than female unemployment. However, the level of females unemployed is significantly higher than regionally and nationally.
- The expectations of 3,200 males and 2,300 females aged 24 and under who are unemployed in Walsall are likely to be damaged by a failure to gain the work experience needed.

Economic Inactivity

Economic activity amongst the working age population is traditionally concentrated among certain groups in particular ethnic minorities, lone parents, older and young working age adults, women, individuals with health problems and those with low skills. This inactivity often results in high levels of worklessness.

Levels of economic inactivity have fluctuated in Walsall between 2004 and 2010, while the Black Country, regional and national levels have remained relatively constant. Despite the inactivity rate slightly declining (0.7 percentage points), there continues to be 42,800 inactive residents – over a quarter of the working age population (27.3%), which is above the average for the West Midlands and England (24.4% and 23.4% respectively).

Chart 4 – Economic Inactivity Rates

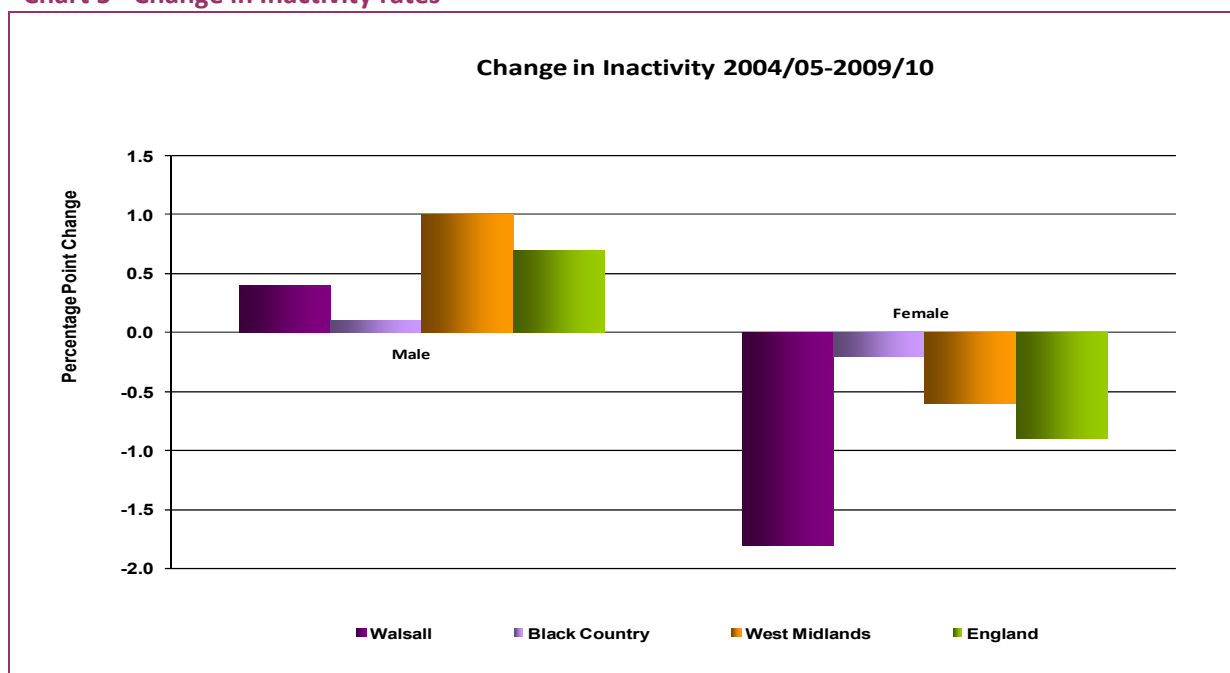


Source: APS March 2010

The slight decline between 2004 and 2010 resulted in around 1,400 residents becoming economically active. This was driven by a decrease in female inactivity (-1,600), while male inactivity increased very slightly (+200). In relative terms, Walsall has benefited from a below average increase in the male inactivity rate combined with an above average decrease with regard to the rate for females. Some of the decline in female inactivity may have contributed to the increase in female unemployment which may have been influenced by the change in the benefits system i.e. people particularly women have moved from economically inactive benefits i.e. lone parent and income related benefits to those for individuals looking for a job i.e. jobseekers allowance.

Currently, in line with national trends, in Walsall there is a much higher level of female, than male economic inactivity (35.3% in comparison to 19.3%). In both cases, Walsall is above the national average, although as with unemployment there is a greater variance in terms of female inactivity (35.3% in Walsall in comparison to 29.7% in England). The majority of the variance between Walsall and the regional and national averages is due to the much higher rates of female inactivity.

Chart 5 - Change in Inactivity rates



Source: APS March 2010

In Walsall there are almost twice as many females within all age groups who are economically inactive compared to the male cohort.

Table 7 – Inactivity Rate by Gender

Inactivity Rate by Gender March 2010

	Walsall No.	Black Country % of Working Age Population by Gender	W. Midlands	England
Inactivity Rate	42,800	27.3	26.6	24.4
Male	14,800	19.1	18.5	17.7
Female	28,000	35.3	34.6	31.1

Source: Annual Population Survey

There is a higher rate of inactivity across the majority of male age groups in Walsall when compared to regional and national levels, with the only exception being those aged 20-24 where there is a lower than national average rate. The male inactivity rate for 25-34 year olds is particularly high at almost double the national average (13.2% in comparison to 7.5%).

Table 8 – Male Inactivity Rate

Male Inactivity Rate by Age March 2010

Age	Walsall No.	Black Country % of Working Age Population within Age Cohort	W. Midlands	England
16-19	3,200	51.5	54.2	51.6
20-24	1,700	17.5	14.3	19.3
25-34	1,900	13.2	10.5	9.0
35-49	2,400	9.1	9.2	8.3
50-64	5,600	26.8	26.6	23.7

Source: Annual Population Survey

This is also above the Black Country average as is the male inactivity rate for 50-64 year olds. The above average levels of female inactivity in the Borough are reflected by the rate for most age group

being above the national and regional average. This variance is most significant in terms of females aged 20-24 (40.7% compared to 30.5%) and 25-34 (38.9% in comparison to 24.1%). The rate for both of these age groups is also above the Black Country average. Female inactivity rates for women aged over 35 are very close to the regional and national averages.

Table 9 – Female Inactivity Rate

Female Inactivity Rate by Age March 2010

Age	Walsall	Black Country	W. Midlands	England
	No.	% of Working Age Population within Age Cohort		
16-19	3,800	55.8	58.2	49.9
20-24	3,800	40.7	34.9	30.5
25-34	5,300	38.9	32.2	27.6
35-49	5,800	22.5	23.8	19.8
50-64	9,300	39.1	42.0	39.8

Source: Annual Population Survey

Inactivity by Ethnicity

Across both the white and ethnic minority populations the inactivity rate is greater in Walsall than regionally and nationally. In line with national trends, there is a much higher rate of inactivity within the ethnic minority population when compared to the white population. While both of these rates are a concern, almost four out of every ten of the ethnic minority population of working age is economically inactive and there are some cultural differences which explain some of the variance e.g. very low activity rates of women in some groups.

Table 10 – Inactivity by Ethnicity

Inactivity by Ethnicity March 2010

Ethnicity	Walsall	Black Country	W. Midlands	England
	No.	% of working age population within ethnic group		
White	33,000	25.3	25.5	22.3
Black	600	18.2	22.5	30.1
Pakistani, Bangladeshi	5,000	55.2	48.8	45.8
Indian	2,500	22.4	23.0	26.1
Mixed ethnic groups	700	52.8	34.2	28.9
Other ethnic groups	1,000	58.6	46.5	43.2

Source: Annual Population Survey

In the Borough, the non-defined other ethnic groups of the working age population has the highest levels of inactivity, with 58.6% of them being economically inactive. These were closely followed by the Pakistani and Bangladeshi population (55.2%), which has the highest rates regionally and nationally. The rates of both of these groups and the mixed ethnic working age population in Walsall are above the regional and national average, in contrast to the rates of the Indian and Black population.

Table 11 – Male Inactivity by Ethnicity**Male Inactivity by Ethnicity March 2010**

Ethnicity	Walsall	Black Country	W. Midlands	England
	No.	% of working age population within ethnic group		
White	11,700	18.0	18.0	16.5
Black	600	32.9	20.3	27.8
Pakistani, Bangladeshi	1,000	24.5	28.2	24.0
Indian	900	15.5	13.1	17.4
Mixed ethnic groups	-	-	-	-
Other ethnic groups	600	-	34.3	37.9

Source: Annual Population Survey,

Note: - shows denotes where figures are unavailable or negligible

It is important to recognise that the above table, and the associated table below, is based on the percentage of the working age client group of the specific ethnic group who are economically inactive.

Other differences in Walsall's profile of male inactivity by ethnicity include:

- Above average levels of male inactivity within the white, mixed ethnic group, Pakistani and Bangladeshi and Black working age populations; and
- Further, Walsall has higher male inactivity rates across the majority of ethnic minority groups than the Black Country (with the exception of Pakistani and Bangladeshi populations).

Table 12 – Female Inactivity by Ethnicity**Female Inactivity by Ethnicity March 2010**

Age	Walsall	Black Country	W. Midlands	England
	No.	% of working age population within ethnic group		
White	21,300	32.5	32.7	28.1
Black	-	-	24.5	32.1
Pakistani, Bangladeshi	4,000	82.8	71.5	68.5
Indian	1,600	29.7	34.1	36.5
Mixed ethnic groups	700	61.5	59.0	49.4
Other ethnic groups	400	-	47.2	40.5

Source: Annual Population Survey

In Walsall the female inactivity rate within the Pakistani and Bangladeshi working age population is 82.8%, which is much higher than the male inactivity rate (24.5%). To a certain extent this reflects cultural differences, although the gap between the two rates is much greater in Walsall and this is linked to the female inactivity rate being much higher than the regional (68.5%) and national (66.9%) average. There is a direct correlation between these higher rates of worklessness and the above average population of Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups in the ward areas of St Matthews, Palfrey, Pleck and Birchills Leamore where these ethnic groups tend to reside.

Other differences in Walsall's profile of female inactivity by ethnicity include above average levels of female inactivity within the white and other ethnic groups.

Inactivity Factors

31,100 (73%) of those that are economically inactive in the Borough do not want a job, a lower than the regional (79%) and national (76%) average. Conversely 27% of the economically inactive in Walsall would like to work suggesting that they are not economically inactive by choice. Many of those not wanting a job will be unable to work due to study commitments, care responsibilities or poor health, and in the former cases, many will seek employment as children grow up.

Walsall has a much a much lower proportion of inactive males that do not want a job - 64% compared to 75% regionally and 72% nationally – suggesting one in three of inactive men would take up employment if (suitable) were available. The respective share of inactive females (78%) is largely in line with the national average (79%).

The scale of those inactive and wanting a job is much higher in Walsall than the Black Country, region or nationally, suggesting a high level of resident barriers. Furthermore, it highlights frustrations and unmet demand and indicative of a lack of jobs available in the local economy.

The 2010 data suggests that there are high levels of inactivity in Walsall which mean that there is a higher proportion of the female and male working age population that want a job 5,400 men and 6,300 women are inactive but want a job. This accounts for 7.5% of the working age population and can be considered as hidden unemployment, given that it may be capturing those with health barriers that restrict them taking up employment.

Although the number of women in this category is greater than the number of males, in relative terms the proportion of inactive men wanting employment at 7% is much higher than the equivalent national figure, only 4.7%.

Table 13 – Inactivity Factors

Inactivity Factors March 2010

	Walsall	Black Country	W. Midlands	England
	No.	% of working age population by gender		
Want a Job	11,700	7.5	5.0	5.6
Don't Want a Job	31,100	19.8	21.6	17.8
Male				
Want a Job	5,400	7.0	4.6	4.7
Don't Want a Job	9,400	12.0	13.9	12.2
Female				
Want a Job	6,300	7.9	5.4	6.4
Don't Want a Job	21,700	27.4	29.2	23.3

Source: Annual Population Survey

Table 13 – Inactivity Factors shows there are 11,700 inactive people who want a job. Although this appears high, not all of those in this group would be able and willing to take up employment if opportunities were available. Table 15 shows In Walsall, of those that are inactive and want a job, 1,300 residents are looking for a job but are unable to start, and while 3,100 are long term sick and 2,600 are looking after family/home. 2,400 residents are classed as part time students, and some will be seeking employment in the next twelve months. It is likely that the individuals in the other group not looking for work are those that have retired early. These individuals face multiple barriers to taking up employment and there would be some potential to address the barriers facing these groups.

Inactivity Reasons

Table 14 – Inactivity Reasons

Reasons for inactivity by those that want a job March 2010

Age	Walsall	Black Country	W. Midlands	England
	No.	% of economically inactive		
Looking – unavailable to start	1,300	11	16	17
Not looking – long term sick	3,100	26	28	26
Not looking – looking after family/home	2,600	22	21	23
Not looking – student	2,400	21	16	15
Not looking – other	2,300	20	17	17

Source: Annual Population Survey,

Note: - shows denotes where figures are unavailable or negligible

Inactivity Summary

- Nearly 42,800 people (27.3% of the working age population) are economically inactive in Walsall, higher than the regional (24.4%) and national rates (23.4%)
- Between 2004 and 2010 there was a slight decline in inactivity in the Borough and 1,400 residents (female) became economically active, and this is linked to efforts and policy changes to encourage lone parents to seek employment.
- Female inactivity (35.3%) is much higher than male inactivity (19.3%), as it is elsewhere, and is also significantly higher than the regional (31.1%) and national average (29.7%)
- In Walsall inactivity is higher than the regional and national average across the majority of age groups – but male and female inactivity in Walsall is particularly high in 20-34 year olds
- Inactivity is also higher than the regional and national average across both the white and ethnic minority populations although in line with national trends
- Inactivity is higher within the ethnic minority population with almost four in every ten of the ethnic minority population being economically inactive which may be linked to cultural differences
- Economically inactive members of Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities are likely to be residing in the ward areas of Birchills Leamore, St Matthews, Pleck and Palfrey.
- There is a particularly high level of inactivity within the female Pakistani and Bangladeshi working age population (82.8%)

Benefit Claimants

The Department for Work and Pension's benefit datasets categorise claimants in statistical groups. Each claimant is placed into one group depending on their main benefit type. There are higher levels of benefit claimants in Walsall within each of the main DWP statistical groups when compared to regional and national levels, although levels are similar to those in the Black Country. In February 2010, some 34,610 residents in the Borough were claiming benefits, accounting for over a fifth (21.9%) of the working age population, compared to 17.1% regionally and 14.7% nationally.

Walsall has a much higher level of Job Seekers and ESA and IB claimants in the region. It also has a much higher level of lone parents and carers. The largest group on the Borough is those claiming IB and ESA, 13,180 residents (8.4% of the working age population) are in receipt of the benefit, compared to 6.9% regionally and 6.4% nationally. Following this in terms of scale Job seekers are the second largest group, with around 10,810 claimants accounting for 6.9% of the working age population, compared to 5.1% regionally and 3.9% nationally.

Table 15 – Benefit Claimants
Benefit Claimants February 2010

Statistical Group	Walsall No.	Black Country % of Working Age Population	W. Midlands	England	
Job Seeker	10,810	6.9	6.8	5.1	3.9
ESA and IB	13,180	8.4	8.1	6.9	6.3
Lone Parent	4,160	2.6	2.6	2.0	1.8
Carer	2,880	1.8	1.7	1.3	1.1
Others Income Related Benefit	1,180	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.5
Disabled	1,990	1.3	1.2	1.1	1.0
Bereaved	400	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2
Total	34,610	21.9	21.4	17.1	14.7

Source: DWP Benefits, NOMIS,

In February 2010, there were around 18,690 male benefit claimants in Walsall, accounting for 24% of the male working age population (compared to 18.5% regionally and 15.5% nationally). This was higher in actual and proportionate terms than the number of female claimants, which was around 15,910 (19.9% of the female working age population compared to 15.8% regionally and 13.9% nationally). Further, the gap between the Borough wide and the national average was also greater for the male, rather than female working age population (8.5 percentage points compared to 6.0 percentage points).

Within the male population, the two largest groups, in terms of the number of claimants and the proportion of the working age population, are Job Seekers and IB and ESA claimants, and for both of these two statistical groups along with others on income related benefits, there is a higher proportion of the male, rather than female working age population claiming. This is in line with national trends. In Walsall, males account for almost three quarters (74%) of the Borough's Job Seekers and 60% of IB and ESA claimants. Trends relating to both of these statistics groups are further examined in the individual profile.

Table 16 – Male Benefit Claimants**Male Benefit Claimants February 2010**

Statistical Group	Walsall No.	Black Country % of Male Working Age Population	W. Midlands	England
Job Seeker	7,970 10.2	10	7.5	5.6
ESA and IB	7,850 10.1	9.7	8	7.4
Carer	900 1.2	1.1	0.8	0.6
Others Income Related Benefit	900 1.2	1.1	0.9	0.7
Disabled	850 1.1	1.1	1	0.9
Lone Parent	150 0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1
Bereaved	70 0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Total	18,690 24	23.3	18.5	15.5

Source: DWP Benefits, NOMIS,

Across all statistical groups, there is a higher proportion of the male working age population claiming benefits in Walsall than nationally. This is particularly the case in relation to Carers Allowance (double the national average), Job Seekers and others on income related benefits.

Unlike the male population, the two largest groups within the female benefit claimant population are ESA and IB claimants followed by Lone Parents. Reflecting national trends there are much higher levels of female, rather than male lone parents and carers and a slightly higher proportion of the female working age population are disabled or bereaved. In Walsall, females account for 96% of lone parent and 69% of carers claiming benefits. Across all benefit types, there is a higher proportion of the female working age population claiming in Walsall than nationally. This is particularly the case in relation to job seekers, carers and lone parents.

Table 17 – Female Benefit Claimants**Female Benefit Claimants February 2010**

Statistical Group	Walsall No.	Black Country % of Female Working Age Population	W. Midlands	England
ESA and IB	5,330 6.7	6.5	5.7	5.3
Lone Parent	4,010 5.0	4.9	3.9	3.4
Job Seeker	2,840 3.6	3.6	2.7	2.1
Carer	1,980 2.5	2.3	1.8	1.5
Disabled	1,140 1.4	1.4	1.2	1
Bereaved	330 0.4	0.4	0.4	0.3
Others income related benefit	280 0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2
Total	15,910 19.9	19.5	15.8	13.9

Source: DWP Benefits, NOMIS

The table below shows the level of claimants in relation to each type of benefit, it also highlights the level of residents which claim a combination of benefits. Across the majority of single and combined benefit types, Walsall has a higher level of claimants than regionally and nationally. In particular, the Borough has a high level of JSA Claimants when including the combined benefit groups as well as IB Claimants.

Table 18 - Benefit Claimants**Benefit Claimants February 2010**

Statistical Group	Walsall		Black Country	W. Midlands	England
	No.	% of Working Age Population			
JSA	10,590	6.7	6.7	5	3.8
Income Support/Pension Credit	4,760	3.0	2.9	2.2	2.0
IB or ESA	4,050	2.6	2.5	2.2	2.0
Disability Living Allowance	1,970	1.2	1.2	1.1	0.9
Carers Allowance	1,940	1.2	1.1	0.9	0.7
Widows Benefit	170	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Severe Disablement Allowance	20	0	0	0	0
Combination of Benefits					
IB/ESA and DLA	2,960	1.9	1.9	1.6	1.4
IS/PC and IB/SDA	2,490	1.6	1.5	1.2	1.1
IS/PC, IB and DLA	2,490	1.6	1.5	1.3	1.3
IS/PC and CA	1,170	0.7	0.7	0.5	0.4
Other combinations	1,140	0.7	0.8	0.6	0.5
IS/PC, DLA and SDA	680	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4
DLA and SDA	180	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Column Total	34,610	21.9	21.4	17.1	14.7

Source: DWP Benefits, NOMIS,

Note: Does not round as negligible figures relating to unknown groups are unavailable

The issue of lower income levels in the Borough is highlighted with Walsall also having above average levels of residents claiming income related benefits such as Income Support and Carers Allowance. In terms of those claiming single benefits, Income Support claimants are the second largest group, with around 4,760 residents (3.0% of the working age population). In addition to IB, ESA, Disability Living Allowance and Carers Allowance, there is a higher level of residents in Walsall that claim Income support.

Benefit Claimants

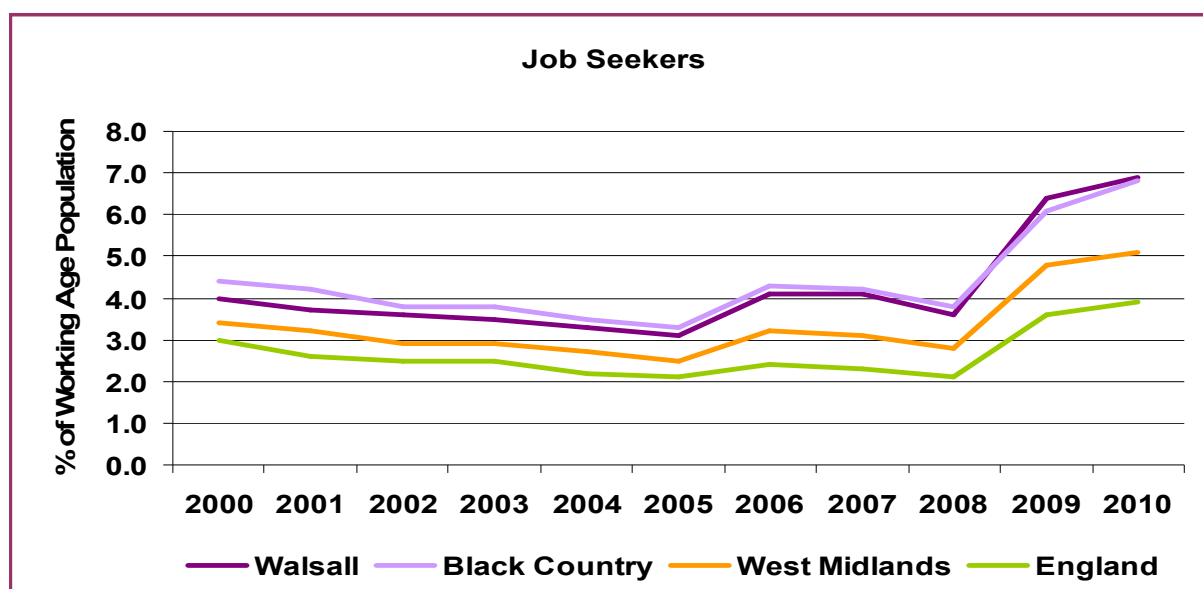
- In February 2010, 34,610 residents Were claiming benefits accounting for over a fifth (21.9%) of the working age population, compared to 17.1% regionally and 14.7% nationally.
- There are higher levels of benefit claimants within each of the main DWP statistical groups in Walsall than regionally and nationally and this is especially the case in relation to job seekers, ESA and IB claimants, lone parents and carers.
- There are 11,110 residents who are in receipt of a combination of benefits.
- The largest group in the Borough is those claiming IB and ESA (13,180 residents) closely followed by those currently unemployed claiming Jobseekers Allowance.

Job Seekers

Traditionally Walsall has had a lower proportion of working age jobseekers than the Black Country, albeit by a small margin, but recent years have seen the proportion of people in Walsall seeking employment and claiming benefits over-take the Black Country to have the highest claimant levels locally, regionally and nationally.

As of February 2010 Walsall recorded a job seeker rate of 6.9%, in line with the surrounding Black Country area (6.8%) but higher than the West Midlands (5.1%) and significantly higher than nationally (3.9%). The chart below details the change in job seeker rates in Walsall and the wider area. The level of job seekers claiming benefits was gradually decreasing between 2000 and 2005, levelling off for a while but this seemed to increase again to higher levels since late 2005. Then increasing again following the onset of recession with a sharp rise from 2008 onwards, resulting in claimant rates almost doubling in Walsall. The overall trend of decline/increase is mirrored in the wider area as well as regionally and nationally, but Walsall has seen a steeper increase in claimants over the same time period.

Chart 6 – Job Seekers



Compared to 2000, in February 2010, there were 4,510 additional job seekers in Walsall – 3,140 males (+65%) and 1,360 (+92%) females – and claiming benefits. The respective claimant rates increased by 4.1 and 1.7 percentage points, and in both cases this was greater than the increase regionally (+2.2 and +1.1 percentage points) and nationally (+0.9 and +0.7 percentage points).

Unlike the unemployment rate, there has not been a more significant increase in female rather than job seekers in Walsall between 2007 and 2010. Instead the male job seeker rate has increased by 4.1 percentage points (compared to +1.7 percentage points for females) and this has been greater than the regional and national increases (by 1.9 percentage points and 3.2 percentage points).

The following tables examine the breakdown of JSA claimants by age as well as gender. The largest claimant groups for both genders are the under 25 year's group; representing 30% of all men job seekers claiming benefits. There are substantial numbers in the 25-44 age cohorts, groups with a long working life. The 35-44 year old cohort is likely to have been the principle income earner in many households.

The overall JSA claimant numbers had shown overall decline until January 2008 and the rate of decline was slower than the national and regional average. However, after May 2008 the JSA

claimant numbers increased significantly for 18-24 age groups – an increase of 1290. Likewise there was a steady increase in JSA claimant numbers across older age groups.

Until January 2008, the JSA claimant duration time scales were either remaining steady or showing slight decline. However, May 2008, the JSA claimants on benefit for less than 3 months increased and continued to increase until January 2009. This had a chain reaction effect on all other longer time scales for JSA claimants. That is, from September 2008, the 3-6 Months time scales started showing increase followed by 6-9 months. It is notable that during 2008, the financial crisis effecting banks and businesses had driven up the numbers of redundancies and overall unemployment levels resulting in an increase in longer term unemployment levels of 12 months plus.

Chart 7 – JSA Claimants Duration from 2005 – 2010

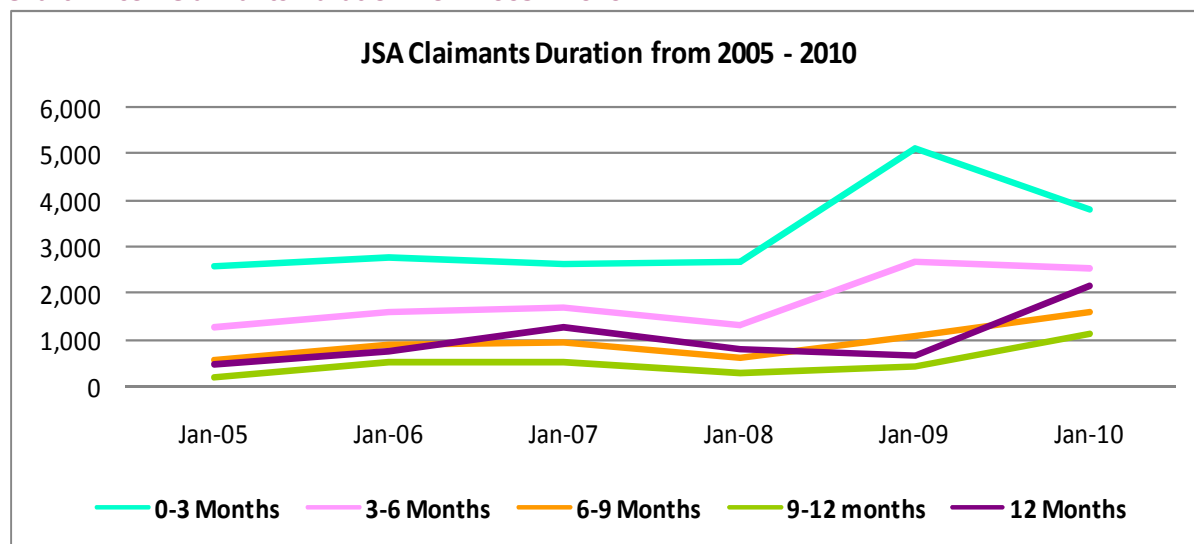


Chart 8 – JSA Claimants Number by Age

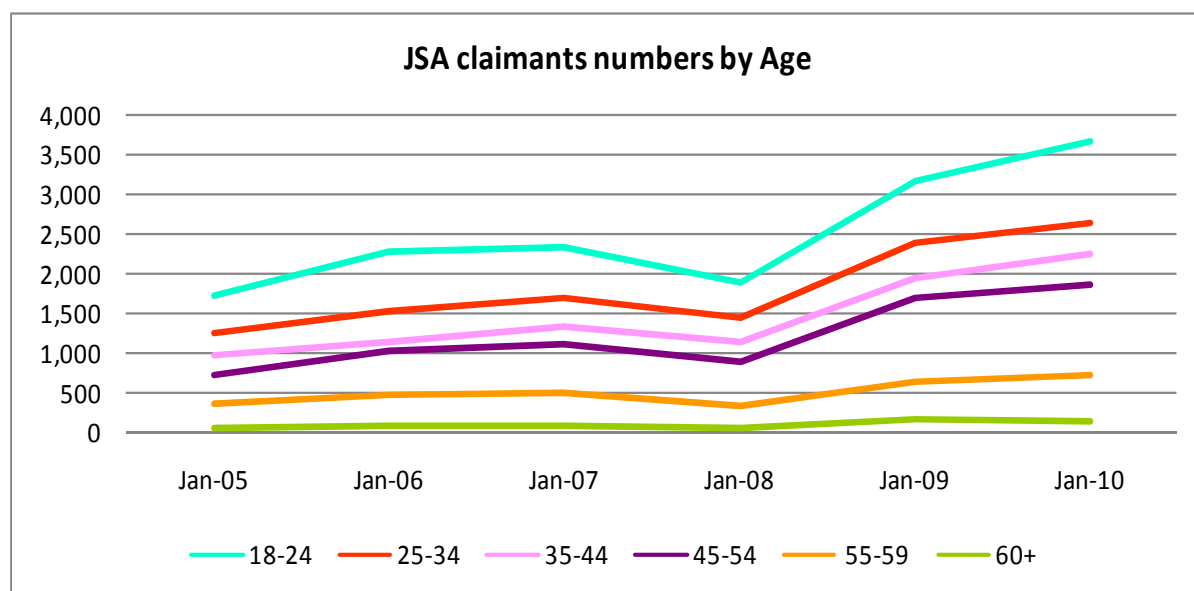


Table 19 – Male Job Seeker Claimants by Age**Male Job Seeker Claimants by Age February 2010**

Age	Walsall	Black Country	W. Midlands	England
	No.	% of male working age population		
Under 25	2,420	3.1	3.0	2.2
25-34	2,080	2.7	2.6	2.0
35-44	1,600	2.0	2.0	1.5
45-54	1,270	1.6	1.6	1.2
55-59	500	0.6	0.6	0.5
60-64	100	0.1	0.1	0.1

Source: DWP Benefits, NOMIS

Of the total number of women seeking employment and claiming benefits in Walsall, 37% are aged less than 25 years old. This is a significant proportion of female claimants and there is a need to understand the barriers women face in finding and securing work. In comparison to the local and wider areas, the age profile of female JSA claimants in Walsall is very similar to those in the Black Country, but higher than regionally and nationally across all age cohorts. In particular, the proportion of total working age population who are female JSA claimants and under 25 in Walsall (1.3%) is higher than in the West Midlands (0.9%) and England (0.7%).

Table 20 – Female Job Seeker Claimants by Age**Female Job Seeker Claimants by Age February 2010**

Age	Walsall	Black Country	W. Midlands	England
	No.	% of female working age population		
Under 25	1,060	1.3	1.3	0.9
25-34	490	0.6	0.6	0.5
35-44	570	0.7	0.8	0.5
45-54	520	0.7	0.7	0.5
55-59	180	0.2	0.2	0.2
60-64	~	-	-	-

Source: DWP Benefits, NOMIS

Of the 10,600 total job seeker claimants recorded in February 2010, 81% did not have children. In total, 5.5% of the working age population in Walsall that are seeking employment and claiming benefits are without dependent children and 1.2% of job seekers do have children. In comparison to the wider Black Country area these proportions are almost identical, although when considered against the regional and national averages, both categories of claimants are higher.

Table 21 – Job Seeker Claimants with Children**Job Seeker Claimants with Children February 2010**

Age	Walsall	Black Country	W. Midlands	England
	No.	% of working age population		
Total Claimants	10,810	6.9	6.8	5.1
Without Children	8,710	5.5	5.6	4.2
With Children	1,880	1.2	1.1	0.7
Unknown	230	0.1	0.1	0.1

Source: DWP Benefits, NOMIS

Of the people who are claiming job seeker related benefits in Walsall, there are a number who are classed as being long term claimants – over one year. The total proportion of working age, long term

claimants in Walsall is 1.4%, which is in line with the Black Country and marginally higher than the West Midlands (1.0%) and more than double the national levels (0.6%).

This is linked to the proportion of long term female claimants in Walsall (1.0%) being more than double the national average (0.3%) as well as the proportion of long term male claimants (2.0%) being double the average (1.0%). In both proportionate and actual terms, however, in line with national trends the level of working age long term male claimants compared to long term female claimants is much higher.

Table 22 – Long Term Job Seeker Claimants by Gender (more than 1 year)

Long Term Job Seeker Claimants by Gender (More than 1 year)					
	Walsall		Black Country	W. Midlands	England
	No.		% of working age population by gender		
Total	2,260	1.4	1.4	1.0	0.6
Male	1,790	2	2.3	1.6	1.0
Female	470	1	0.6	0.4	0.3

Source: DWP Benefits, NOMIS

The level of job seekers claiming benefits for more than a year has consistently been above the national average over the past three years, although a more significant increase in long term claimants in the Borough between 2009 and 2010 has led to the gap increasing. This significant increase in 2010 highlights the unemployment impact of the recession and also suggests that those which have been unemployed for longer are finding it harder to re-enter the labour market as they are faced with issues relating to there being fewer jobs and increasing competition from candidates with more recent experience.

The significant increase between 2009 and 2010 is further highlighted by the trend relating to those that have been claiming JSA for more than two years. While very low levels of the population had been claiming JSA for more than two years in Walsall in 2008 and 2009, a significant increase in 2010 has resulted in levels now being higher than those nationally (0.3% in comparison to 0.1%).

Table 23 – Long term Job Seeker Claimants – Change over Time

Long Term Job Seeker Claimants – Change over Time						
Age	Walsall No.		Black Country % of working age population	W. Midlands	England	
Claiming for more than 1 Year						
2008	840	0.5	0.6	0.5		0.3
2009	810	0.5	0.6	0.5		0.3
2010	2,260	1.4	1.4	1.0		0.6
Claiming for more than 2 years						
2008	250	0.2	0.2	0.2		0.1
2009	190	0.1	0.1	0.2		0.1
2010	400	0.3	0.3	0.3		0.1

Source: DWP Benefits, NOMIS

In February 2010 21% of the job seeker claimants in Walsall had been claiming for over a year compared to 17% nationally. While this reduces significantly to match national levels when focusing on those that have been claiming for more than two years (4%) it suggests that people experience longer periods of unemployment in Walsall. Again this has increased more significantly in Walsall between 2009 and 2010, highlighting the impact of the recession and a lack of suitable jobs to allow a significant proportion of claimants to re-enter employment relatively quickly.

Table 24 – Long Term Job Seeker Claimants as % of Total JSA Claimants

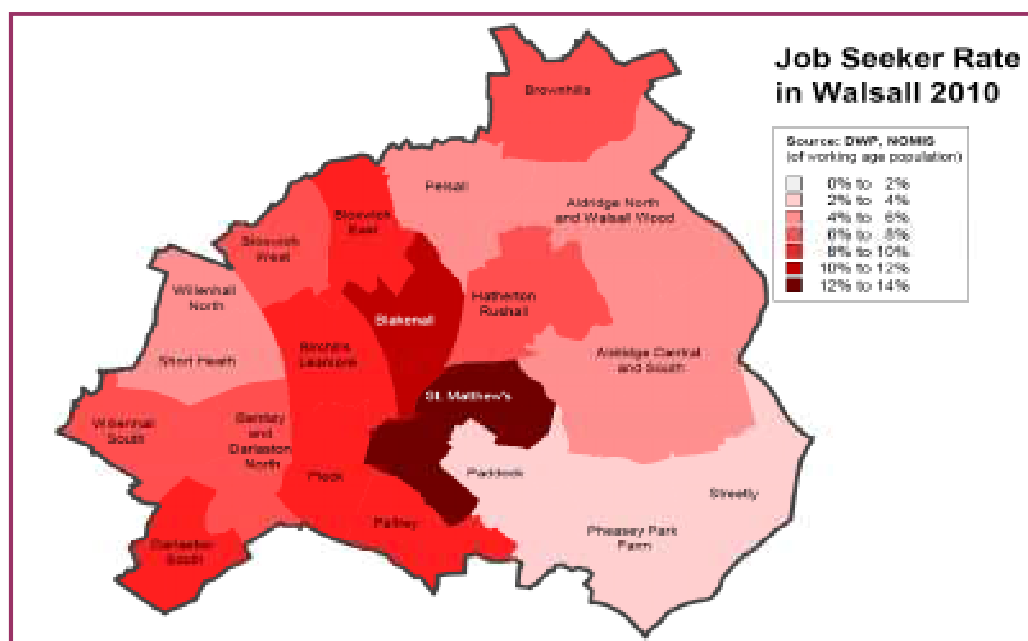
Long Term Job Seeker Claimants as % of total JSA Claimants						
Age	Walsall No.		Black Country % of total JSA Claimants	W. Midlands		England
Claiming for more than 1 Year						
2008	840	15	16	18		15
2009	810	8	9	11		9
2010	2,260	21	21	20		17
Claiming for more than 2 years						
2008	250	4	6	8		5
2009	190	2	2	4		3
2010	400	4	4	5		4

Source: DWP Benefits, NOMIS

Geographic Concentrations

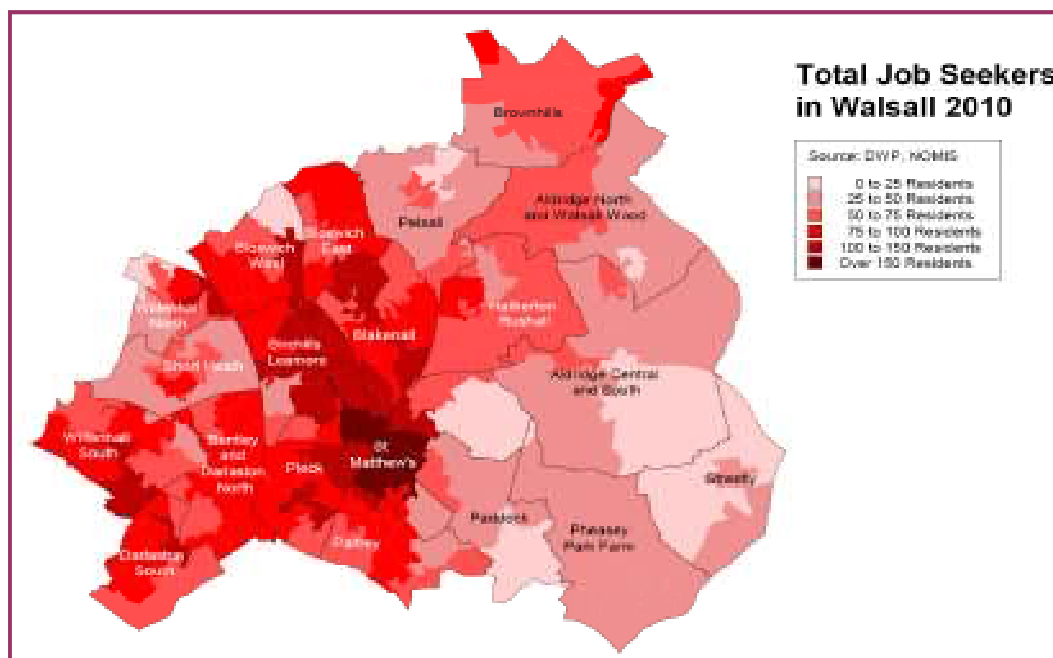
The below map illustrates the distribution of job seekers claiming benefits in Walsall, as a proportion of all working age residents within each ward. The range varies from 2.4% to just fewer than 13% of the ward working age population. St. Matthew's ward in the centre of Walsall stands out as the area with the highest proportion of job seeker claimants (12.9%) and it is bordered on the west by areas which display similarly high rates such as, Blakenall (10%), Birchills Leamore (9.8%) and Bloxwich East (9.4%). There are much lower claimant rates in the east of the borough, and broadly speaking unemployment rates are closely connected to the housing market profile i.e. areas with social and, rented and low value properties have higher rates of unemployment. The main concentration of higher rates of jobseekers appear to near the town centre and in areas where there is high levels of social housing demonstrating a correlation between poor housing and unemployment. The neighbourhoods of Goscote, Moxley, Harden, and Ryecroft in the centre of Walsall and those in and around Darlaston and Willenhall, namely Moxley, New Invention, Short Heath show prevalent levels of unemployment.

Map 2 – Job Seeker Rate in Walsall 2010



The map below shows the number of job seeker claimants within Walsall's Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) illustrating concentrations of claimants within the wards. Of the 169 LSOAs in Walsall, four had over 150 claimants in February 2010 and these are all within St Matthews. Based on an average population of around 1,500 per LSOA this amounts to a claimant rate of 10%.

Map 3 – Total Job Seekers in Walsall 2010



Overall, in February 2010, 26 of Walsall LSOAs (15%) had over 100 claimants and this highlights localised pockets of job seeker claimants in St Matthews (6 LSOAs), the east of Birchills Leamore (5 LSOAs), the south of Bloxwich East (3 LSOAs) and central and eastern Pleck (3 LSOAs).

Table 25 - Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA) With A High Job Seeker (JSA) Rate Feb 2010

Ward	LSOA Name	JSA Rate	Number Of JSA Claimants
St Matthews	Caldmore North	19.00%	200
St Matthews	Walsall Town Centre West	17.60%	180
Palfrey	Caldmore West	15.20%	135
Pleck	New Mills West	13.50%	100
Blakenall	Goscote North	12.90%	50
Willenhall North	New Invention Central	12.80%	130
St Matthews	St Matthew's & Highgate	12.70%	155
Bloxwich West	Leamore North	12.70%	105
St Matthews	Walsall Town Centre East	12.50%	155
Hatherton Rushall	Butts & Arboretum	12.40%	115
Blakenall	Harden North West	12.30%	135
Blakenall	Goscote South	12.10%	75
Birchills Leamore	Leamore South	12.00%	115
St Matthews	Ryecroft South	11.90%	130
Birchills Leamore	Beechdale East	11.90%	105
St Matthews	Ryecroft North	11.70%	125
Bloxwich East	Blakenall Heath West	11.70%	105

Birchills Leamore	Leamore East	11.60%	115
Birchills Leamore	Beechdale West	11.50%	105
Bloxwich West	Bloxwich West	11.50%	115
Darlaston South	Darlaston Central	11.10%	115
Bloxwich East	Fishley	11.00%	95
Darlaston South	Old Moxley	11.00%	95
Pleck	Pleck North	10.90%	105
Willenhall South	Willenhall South	10.70%	145
Bloxwich East	Blakenall Heath East	10.60%	100
Blakenall	Coal Pool East	10.50%	100
Blakenall	Harden South East	10.50%	75
Bloxwich East	Blakenall Heath North	10.40%	105
Bentley and Darlaston North	Bentley Central	10.40%	90

Source: DWP Benefits, Nomis

Job Seekers Allowance Summary

- Walsall has been harder hit by the recession resulting in higher levels of jobseekers than regional and nationally.
- Long term unemployment is a growing issue in the Borough, particularly in relation to those unemployed for between 1 and 2 years. In Walsall over a fifth of job seekers (21%) have been in receipt of support for over a year in comparison to 17% nationally, suggesting a lack of suitable jobs for claimants to re-enter employment.
- Similarly, reducing the number of jobs seekers is a key priority for the Borough. This is the second largest statistical group, with over 10,500 residents seeking employment and the marked increase since the start of the recession has outpaced regional and national increases.
- While the number of females seeking employment and claiming benefits is much lower than the number of males, the job seeker rate is much higher than the regional and national average and there is a need to understand the barriers women face in finding and securing work in the Borough (and the Black County).
- Job seekers aged fewer than 25 are an important priority group – they form a significant proportion of the total job seekers and the rate in the Borough for this group is higher than regionally and nationally.
- Walsall ethnic groups in particularly Black show a much higher than average rates
- There are significant concentrations of job seekers in and around the town centre, St Matthews, Blakenall, Birchills Leamore and Bloxwich East, which is closely connected to the housing market and levels of social, rented and low value properties.
- LSOA analysis suggests that there are localised pockets of IB claimants in Caldmore North, Walsall Town Centre West, Caldmore West, and New Mills West

Incapacity Benefit and Employment Support Allowance

Health related issues face a small but significant group of the working age population. Almost a quarter of those that are inactive have problems connected with arms, legs, hands, feet, back, neck and/or problems with blood or circulatory, stomach, liver, kidney, digestion and diabetes.

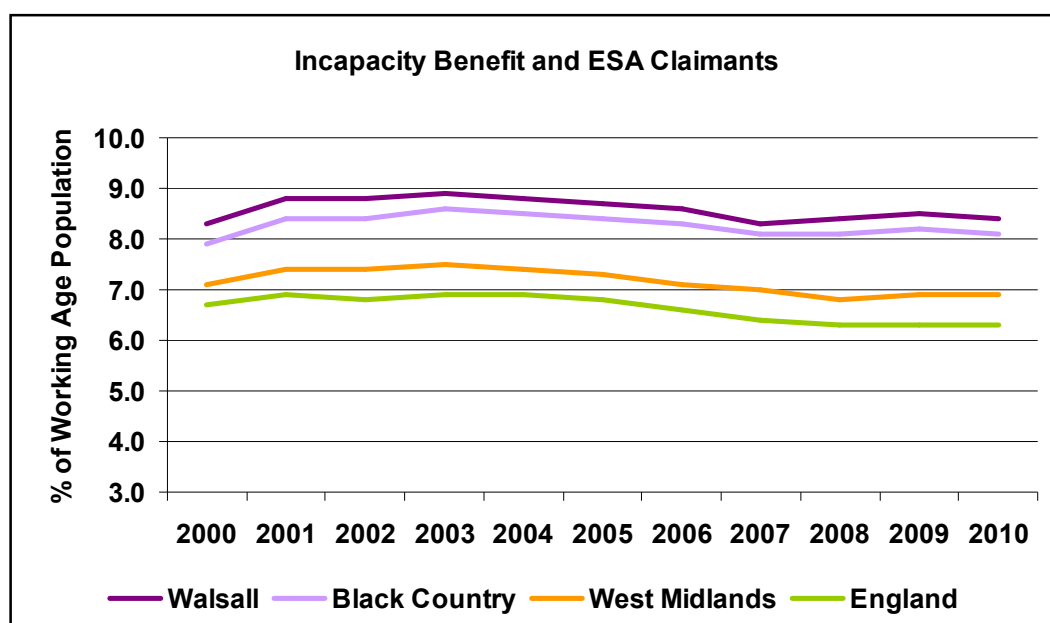
Table 26 – IB Claimants with Ill Health

Problems connected with	Walsall	Black Country % of economically inactive	W. Midlands	England
Connected with arms, legs, hands, feet, back, neck	24	20	18	19
Difficulty in seeing or hearing	9	6	5	4
Blood or circulatory, stomach, liver, kidney, digestion, diabetes	24	23	19	20
Depression, mental probs, learning probs, nervous	12	13	11	12
Skin conditions, epilepsy, progressive condition	14	12	12	12

Source: Annual Population Survey 2010

The number and proportion of those claiming IB and ESA benefits as their main type of benefit has remained relatively stable for most of the last decade. Walsall and the Black Country have always had a relatively high proportion of residents in receipt of IB. The slight decreases and fluctuations in IB and ESA over time is a mixture of two factors – a growing economy and greater support to help people back in to work, and a more rigorous regime which sought to reduce the number of economically inactive.

Chart 8 – IB and ESA Claimants



In terms of scale, Walsall has large numbers of males in receipt of IB, 7,850 in 2010. Numbers are high in the 35-44 and 45-54 year old categories and both of these groups have a considerable working life prior to retirement. There are also a small but significant number of relatively young men in receipt of IB.

Table 27 - Male IB and ESA Claimants by Age**Male IB and ESA Claimants by Age February 2010**

Age	Walsall	Black Country	W. Midlands	England
No.	% of male working age population			
Under 25	470	0.6	0.5	0.5
25-34	1,080	1.4	1.2	1.1
35-44	1,510	1.9	2.0	1.6
45-54	1,970	2.5	2.5	2.0
55-59	1,290	1.7	1.6	1.3
60-64	1,530	2.0	1.9	1.5

Source: DWP Benefits, NOMIS

Walsall has a relatively similar profile of women in receipt of IB to other areas, although the proportion of working age females aged over 45 in receipt of the benefit, where the number of claimants is highest, is higher than nationally. There will be a major challenge in assisting older people back into employment.

Table 28 - Female IB and ESA Claimants by Age**Female IB and ESA Claimants by Age February 2010**

Age	Walsall	Black Country	W. Midlands	England
No.	% of female working age population			
Under 25	360	0.4	0.4	0.4
25-34	720	0.9	0.8	0.7
35-44	1,180	1.5	1.5	1.3
45-54	1,890	2.4	2.3	2.0
55-64	1,190	1.5	1.5	1.3

Source: DWP Benefits, NOMIS

Walsall has a higher long term IB and ESA rate in terms of those claiming for both more than two years and more than five years. The higher rates of long term claimants in Walsall are a reflection of the higher overall IB claimants levels in the Borough. When looking at those who have been in receipt of IB and ESA for more than two and five years as a proportion of total claimants, the levels in the Borough are largely in line with the local, regional and national averages. Around 78% of IB claimants in the Borough have been in receipt of the benefit for more than 2 years and around 60% have been in receipt for more than 5 years.

Table 29 - Long Term IB and ESA Claimants by Gender**Long Term IB and ESA Claimants by Gender - more than 2 and 5 years**

Sex	Walsall	Black Country	W. Midlands	England	
No.	% working age population by gender				
Claiming for more than 2 years					
Total	10,270	6.5	6.4	5.3	4.9
Male	6,080	7.8	7.6	6.2	5.6
Female	4,180	5.2	5.2	4.5	4.1
Claiming for More than 5 years					
Total	7,820	5.0	4.9	4.1	3.8
Male	4,600	5.9	5.8	4.8	4.4
Female	3,220	4.0	4.0	3.5	3.2

Source: DWP Benefits, NOMIS

Between 2008 and 2010 the rate of long term IB claimants has remained relatively stable in Walsall in line with national trends.

Table 30 - Long Term IB and ESA Claimants – Change over time

Long Term IB and ESA Claimants – Change over time

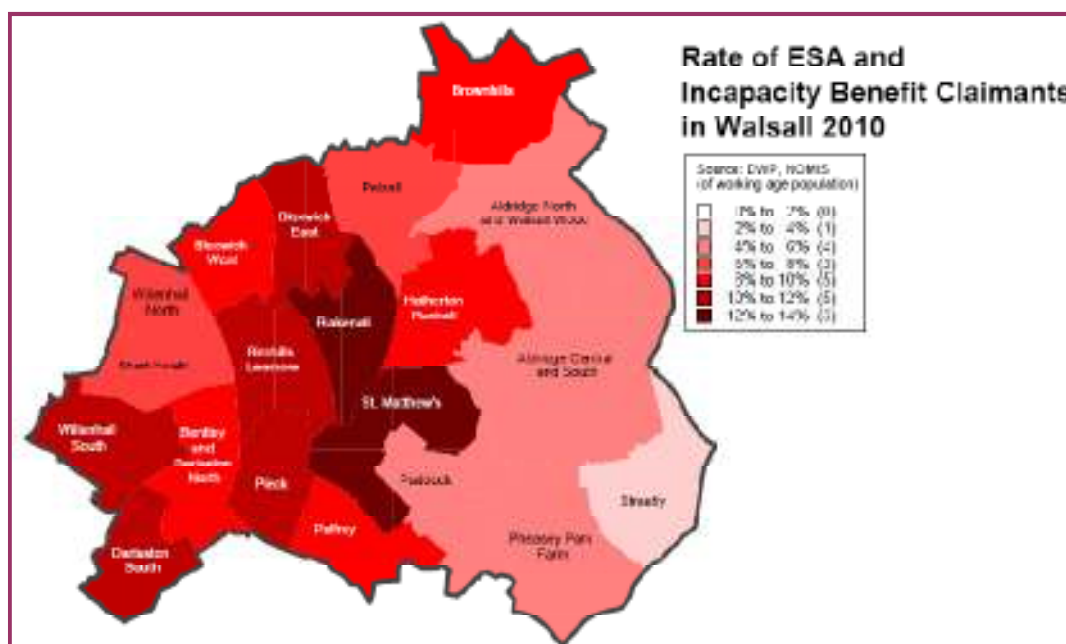
Age	Walsall No.	Black County % working age population	W. Midlands % working age population	England
Claiming for more than 2 Year				
2008	10,190	6.5	6.3	5.4
2009	10,170	6.4	6.3	5.3
2010	10,270	6.5	6.4	5.3
Claiming for more than 5 years				
2008	7,740	4.9	4.8	4.2
2009	7,850	5.0	4.9	4.2
2010	7,820	5.0	4.9	4.1

Source: DWP Benefits, NOMIS

Geographic Concentrations

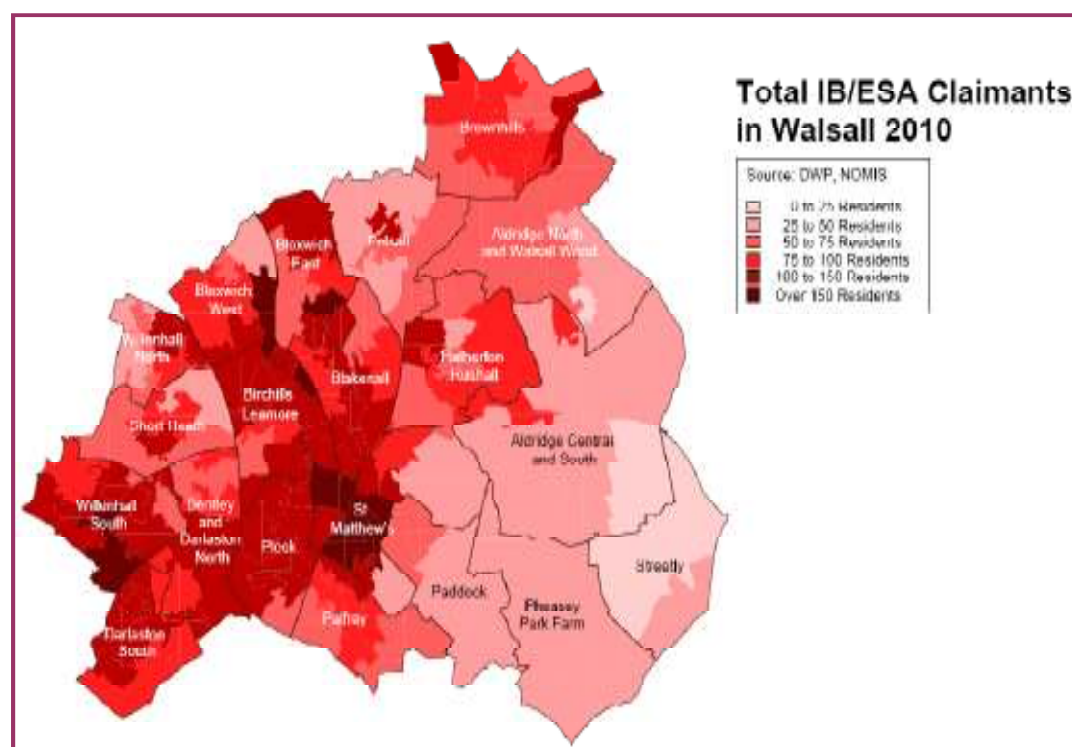
There is a marked east west variation in the proportions of the working age population claiming ESA and IB. The variation ranges from 1,090 people (13.3%) in St Matthews and 840 in (12.4%) in Blakenall to 200 (2.5%) in Streetly and 225 (4.3%) in Pheasey.

Map 4 – Rate of ESA and IB Claimants in Walsall 2010



Map 5 – Total IB / ESA Claimants in Walsall 2010 shows the number of IB and ESA claimants within Walsall's Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) illustrating concentrations of claimants within the wards. Of the 169 LSOAs in Walsall, eight had over 150 claimants in February 2010 and four of these were within St Matthews. Based on an average population of around 1,500 per LSOA this amounts to a claimant rate of at least 10%. The other four LSOAs were in Willenhall South, Bloxwich West, Bloxwich East and Birchills Leamore.

Map 5 – Total IB / ESA Claimants in Walsall 2010



Overall, in February 2010, 56 of Walsall LSOAs (33%) had over 100 claimants and this highlights localised pockets of IB and ESA claimants within the wards listed in the table below. In particular there were high levels of claimants in St Mathews (7 LSOAs), Willenhall South (7 LSOAs), Birchills Leamore (7 LSOAs), Pleck (6 LSOAs), and Darlaston South (5 LSOAs).

Table 31 - Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA) With A High IB/ESA Rate Feb 2010

Ward	LSOA Name	IB/ESA Rate	Number Of IB/ESA Claimants
Pleck	New Mills West	17.60%	130
St Matthews	Walsall Town Centre West	17.20%	175
Bloxwich West	Bloxwich West	16.50%	165
Blakenall	Harden South East	16.10%	115
Blakenall	Goscote North	15.50%	60
St Matthews	Caldmore North	15.20%	160
Hatherton Rushall	Butts & Arboretum	15.10%	140
Birchills Leamore	Leamore East	15.10%	150
Bloxwich West	Dudley's Fields	14.80%	130
Bloxwich East	Blakenall Heath North	14.80%	150
Pleck	Alumwell South	14.70%	135
Bloxwich West	Leamore North	14.60%	120
Palfrey	Caldmore West	14.60%	130
St Matthews	St Matthew's & Highgate	14.00%	170
Darlaston South	Old Moxley	13.90%	120
Willenhall North	New Invention Central	13.80%	140
Blakenall	Coal Pool East	13.70%	130
Blakenall	Goscote South	13.70%	85

Bloxwich East	Blakenall Heath East	13.70%	130
St Matthews	Caldmore East	13.40%	135
Darlaston South	Rough Hay West	13.10%	125
Willenhall North	New Invention North	13.10%	120
St Matthews	Walsall Town Centre East	12.90%	160
Blakenall	Harden North West	12.70%	140
Short Heath	Lodge Farm North	12.70%	105

Source: DWP Benefits, Nomis

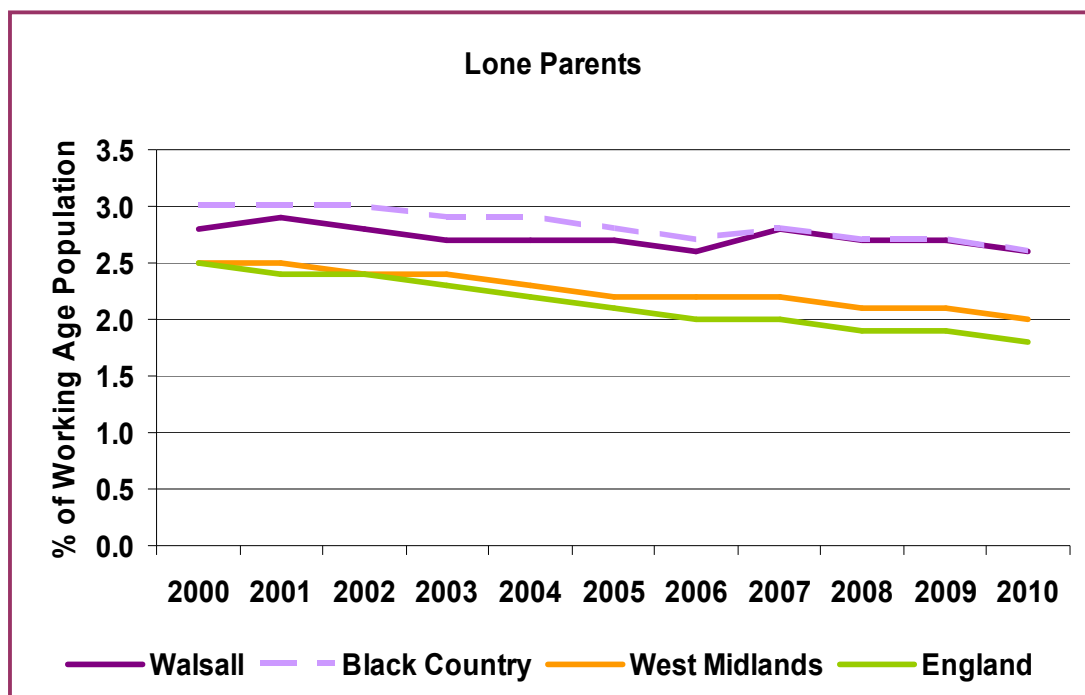
Incapacity Benefit and Employment Support Allowance Summary

- An above average IB claimant rate has been a long term trend in Walsall and the Black Country. In 2010 there were 13,180 residents claiming IB and ESA as their main type of benefit, accounting for 8.4% of the working age population.
- The claimant rate has remained relatively stable over the last decade with the slight fluctuations a result of a growing economy, greater support to help people back into work, and a more rigorous regime which has sought to reduce the number of economically inactive.
- In terms of male claimants, numbers are highest in the 35-44 and 45-54 year old categories and both of these groups have a considerable working life prior to retirement.
- The Borough faces a challenge in assisting older people back into employment with female IB claimant numbers highest amongst 45-54 and 55-59 year olds. There are also a significant number of relatively young men also in receipt of the benefit.
- There is a marked east west variation of the level of IB claimants – as with JSA rates are highest in St Matthews and Blakenall.
- LSOA analysis suggests that there are localised pockets of IB claimants in Walsall Town Centre West, New Mills West, Harden South East and Bloxwich West
- While Walsall has a higher long term IB rate (in terms of those claiming for more than two and more than five years) than regionally and nationally. A feature of IB is that many claimants have been in receipt of support for many years, often reflecting the severity of ill health.

Lone Parents

Following ESA and IB Claimants and Job Seekers, lone parents make up the third largest group of benefit claimants in the Borough. They are a small but important group in the labour market, and there has been a long term policy of encouraging and supporting lone parents to take up employment. With around 4,160 lone parents claiming benefits in Walsall in February 2010, the claimant rate for this group of the working age population (2.6%) is much higher than the regional (2.0%) and national (1.8%) averages. Over the past decade the gap between these averages has increased as levels of lone parents claiming benefits in Walsall has remained relatively stable compared to reductions in the regional and national levels.

Chart 9 – Lone Parents



The majority of lone parents (89%) that claim benefits receive Income Support or Pension Credit. Income support provides support to low income households including those working less than 16 hours and is an important indicator of social issues. This is the group, where the claimant rate is much higher in Walsall (2.3%) than regionally (1.7%) and nationally (1.6%). There are also a group of lone parents which receive Income Support, Pension Credit and /or Carer Allowance.

Table 32 - Benefits claimed by Lone Parents

Benefits claimed by Lone Parents February 2010

Age	Walsall		Black Country	W. Midlands	England
	No.		% of male working age population		
Income Support/Pension Credit	3,710	2.3	2.3	1.7	1.6
IS/PC and Carer Allowance	380	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Other Combinations	70	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1

Source: DWP Benefits, NOMIS,

Note: Does not sum as negligible figures relating to unknown groups are unavailable

In line with national trends, there are very low levels of male lone parents that claim benefits. The two largest groups in Walsall are those age 25-34 and 35-44, although the numbers in each age group is very low.

Table 33 - Male Lone Parent Claimants by Age

Male Lone Parent Claimants by Age February 2010

Age	Walsall	Black Country	W. Midlands	England
No.	% of Male working age population			
Under 25	10	0.0	0.0	0.0
25-34	50	0.1	0.1	0.0
35-44	50	0.1	0.1	0.1
45-54	30	0.0	0.0	0.0
55-59	10	0.0	0.0	0.0
60-64	~	-	-	-

Source: DWP Benefits, NOMIS

The vast majority of lone parents receiving benefits are female and the rate in Walsall is very high when compared to the national average. Claimant numbers and rates are highest amongst younger women in line with national trends and the very high relative rate is linked to the high level of female lone parents in the under 25 cohort claiming benefits. At 1,290, the number of benefit claimants is very large (1.6% of the female working age population compared to 0.9% nationally) and for the aged group 25-34 numbers are 1,680.

Table 34 - Female Lone Parent Claimants by Age

Female Lone Parent Claimants by Age February 2010

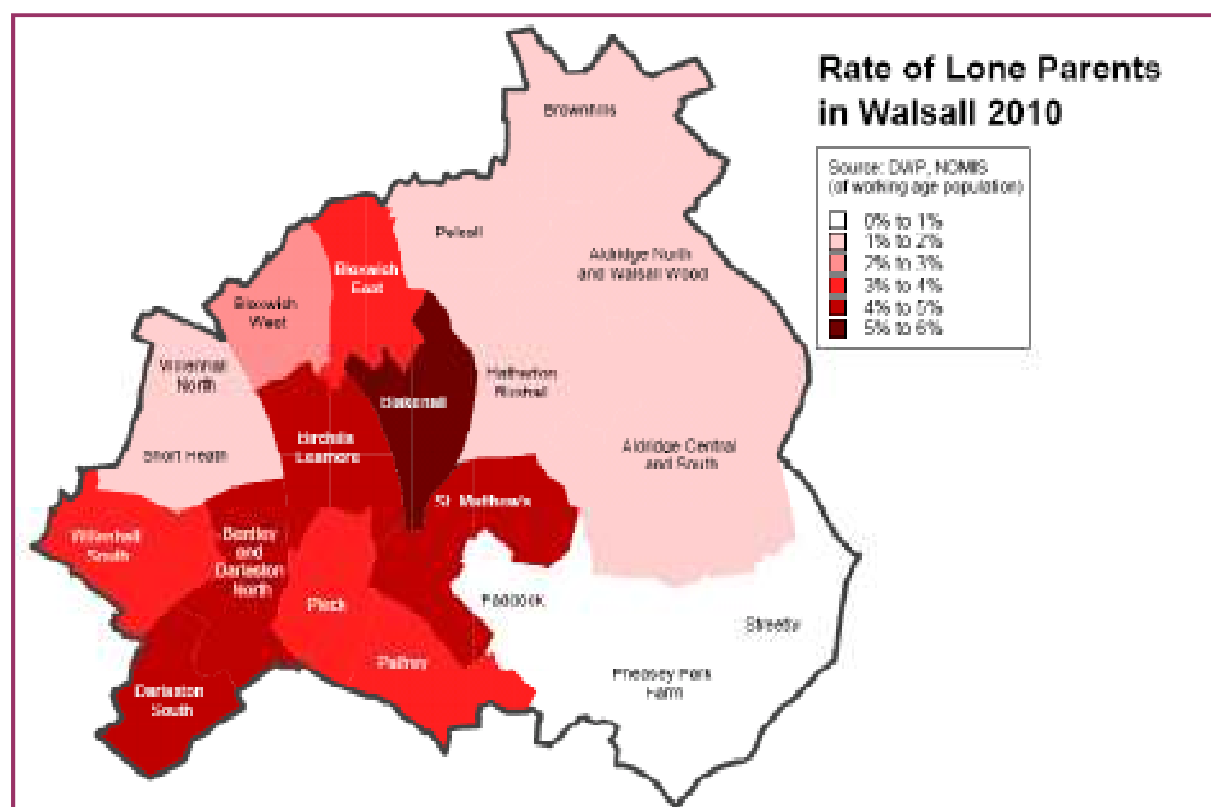
Age	Walsall	Black Country	W. Midlands	England
No.	% of female working age population			
Under 25	1,290	1.6	1.5	1.1
25-34	1,680	2.1	2.0	1.6
35-44	840	1.1	1.1	1.0
45-54	190	0.2	0.2	0.2
55-59	10	0.0	0.0	0.0
60-64	~	-	-	-

Source: DWP Benefits, NOMIS

Geographic Concentrations

Mapping the rate of lone parents claiming benefits shows that there are high concentrations in parts of Walsall, and there is a close link with tenure of housing. The highest concentrations are in Blakenall, Birchills Leamore, Bentley and Darlaston North and South and St Matthews.

Map 6 – Rate of Lone Parents in Walsall 2010



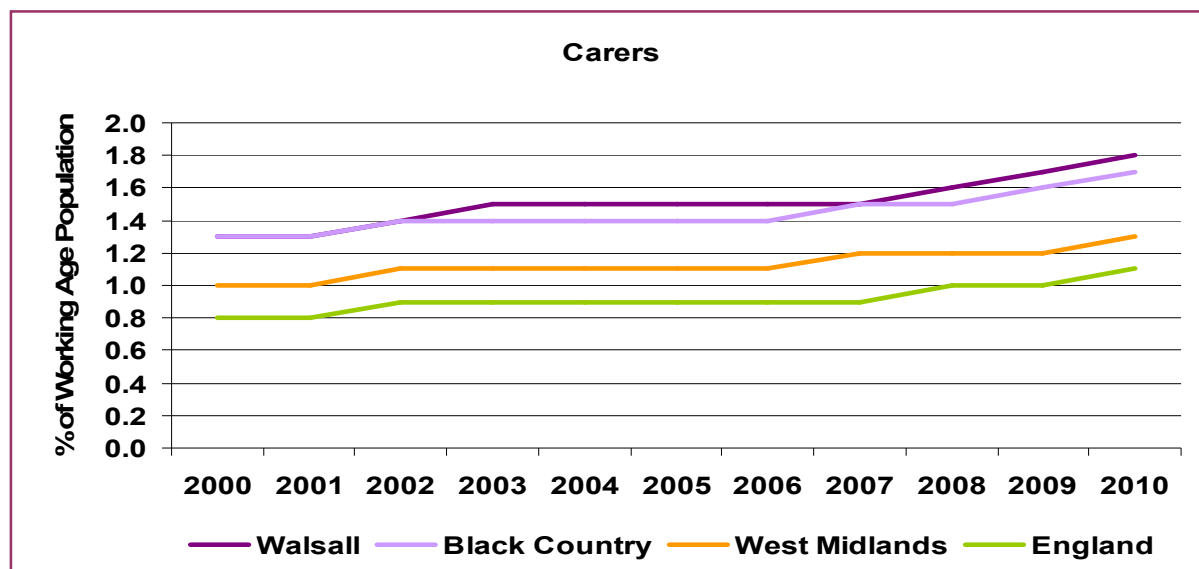
Lone Parents Summary

- Lone parents make up the third largest group of benefit claimants in the Borough. They are a small but important group in the labour market, and there has been a long term policy of encouraging and supporting Lone Parents to take up employment.
- In February 2010, around 4,160 lone parents were claiming benefits and the claimant rate (2.6% of the working age population) was higher than the regional (2.0%) and national average (1.8%). This has been a long term trend.
- The majority of lone parents that claim benefits receive Income Support or Pension Credit. There is also a group of lone parents that receive Carers Allowance as well as Income Support.
- The majority of lone parents claiming benefits are female (96%) and in line with national trends claimant rates are higher amongst young female groups. Key priority groups in Walsall include female lone parents aged under 25 and age 35-34.
- The highest concentrations of lone parents are in Blakenall, Birchills Leamore, Bentley and Darlaston North and South and St Matthews.

Carers

Traditionally Walsall has had a similar level of carers claiming benefits as the Black Country and in February 2010, 2,880 residents (1.8% of the working age population) were claiming benefits (in line with 1.7% in the Black Country). This is higher than the proportion regionally (1.3%) and nationally (1.1%) and this has been a long term trend. The increase in the Borough over since February 2000 has been marginally higher than the national increase (0.5 percentage points compared to 0.3) and by February 2010 the number of carers claiming benefits in the Borough had risen by around 810.

Chart 10 - Carers



The majority of carers (68%) that claim benefits receive Carers Allowance and this is the group, where the claimant rate is much higher in Walsall (1.2%) than regionally (0.9%) and nationally (0.7%). There is also a significant group of carers who claim Income Support/pension Credit as well as Carer Allowance.

Table 35 – Benefits Claimed by Carers

Benefits claimed by Carers February 2010

Age	Walsall		Black Country	W. Midlands	England
	No.		% of male working age population		
Carer Allowance	1,940	1.2	1.1	0.9	0.7
IS/PC and Carer Allowance	790	0.5	0.5	0.3	0.3
Other Combinations	150	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1

Source: DWP Benefits, Note: Does not sum as negligible figures relating to unknown groups are unavailable

The following tables examine the breakdown of carers claiming benefits by age and gender. As mentioned, with 900 male carers claiming benefits in Walsall there is a higher claimant rate in Walsall than regional and nationally. There is a higher level of claimants within the majority of age groups. The largest group within the male claimants is those age 45-54, with around 260 (0.3%) of the male working age population claiming benefits, compared to 0.2% regionally and nationally.

Table 36 – Male Care Claimants by Age
Male Carer Claimants by Age February 2010

Age	Walsall	Black Country	W. Midlands	England
No.	% of male working age population			
aged under 25	60	0.1	0.1	0.0
aged 25-34	100	0.1	0.1	0.1
aged 35-44	180	0.2	0.2	0.1
aged 45-54	260	0.3	0.3	0.2
aged 55-59	140	0.2	0.2	0.1
aged 60-64	160	0.2	0.2	0.1

Source: DWP Benefits, NOMIS

In line with regional and national trends there is a higher level of female, rather than male carers claiming benefits, although the difference in the male and female rate in Walsall is greater reflecting the higher overall level in claimants. In February 2010, there was a higher level of female carer allowance claimants across the majority of age groups with those aged under 25 being the only exception. In particular, the rate of those age 25-34 and 55-59 that are carers and claiming benefits is double the national average. Although in terms of numbers, the largest groups are those aged 35-44 and 45-54.

Table 37 – Female Carer Claimants by Age
Female Carer Claimants by Age February 2010

Age	Walsall	Black Country	W. Midlands	England
No.	% of female working age population			
aged under 25	110	0.1	0.1	0.1
aged 25-34	350	0.4	0.4	0.2
aged 35-44	590	0.7	0.7	0.5
aged 45-54	590	0.7	0.7	0.5
aged 55-59	340	0.4	0.4	0.3
aged 60-64	~	-	-	-

Source: DWP Benefits, NOMIS

Geographic Concentrations

As with lone parents, carers are a small but important group within the working age population. The map below shows the proportion of the working age population who are carers and who are claiming benefits in each ward. This ranged from 0.8% in Streetly to 2.8% in Blakenall. As with JSA and IB claimants there is an east west divide in the Borough, with greater concentrations of carers claiming benefits in the centre and to the west of Walsall.

Others on Income Related Benefits

While lone parents and carers make up a considerable level of claimants receiving income related benefits, In February 2010 there were an additional 1,180 residents in receipt of such benefits. This group has traditionally been larger in Walsall and the Black Country than regionally. While the rate has fluctuated slightly over the past ten years, increases between 2008 and 2010 in all geographies meant that the rate in 2010 was similar, if not identical to that in 2000. In Walsall, the number of residents claiming other income related benefits accounts for 0.7% of the working age population, compared to 0.6% regionally and 0.5% nationally.

The majority of this group (89%) receive Income Support/Pension Credits, with 1,050 claimants in Walsall in 2010. There is also a small group who claim at least one income related benefit along with at least one other type of benefit.

Table 38 - Other Income Related Benefit Claimants

Other Income Related Benefit Claimants February 2010

Age		Walsall		Black Country	W. Midlands	England
		No.		% of male working age population		
Income	Support/Pension Credits	1,050	0.7	0.6	0.5	0.4
Other Combinations		130	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1

Source: DWP Benefits, NOMIS,

Note: Does not sum as negligible figures relating to unknown groups are unavailable

The following tables examine the breakdown of claimants receiving other income related benefits by age and gender. As mentioned, with 900 male claiming other income related benefits in Walsall there is a higher male, rather than female claimant rate in line with national trends. The male rate in Walsall (1.2% of the male working age population) is also higher than the regional (0.9%) and national (0.7%) averages and this is linked to a much higher level of claimants aged 60-64 in Walsall (1% compared to 0.7% and 0.6% regionally and nationally). This is the largest group and with 800 claimants accounts for the majority of male claimants. This may be due to Male population continuing to work until 65 and female population retiring at 60.

Table 39 - Male Claimants of Other Income Related Benefits by Age

Male Claimants of Other Income Related Benefits by Age February 2010

Age		Walsall		Black Country	W. Midlands	England
		No.		% of male working age population		
aged under 25		60	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
aged 25-34		10	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
aged 35-44		10	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
aged 45-54		10	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
aged 55-59		10	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
aged 60-64		800	1.0	1.0	0.7	0.6

Source: DWP Benefits, NOMIS

The level of female claimants is much lower with 280 female residents in Walsall claiming other income related benefits in February 2010. The rate (0.3% of the female working age population) is in line with the Black Country and Regional average and slightly higher than nationally (0.2%). In contrast to male claimants, the largest group of female claimants are aged fewer than 25 and this is

in line with national trends. The 170 young female claimants account for the majority of females claiming other income related benefits in the Borough.

Table 40 - Female Claimants of Other Income Related Benefits by Age

Female Claimants of Other Income Related Benefits by Age February 2010

Age	Walsall	Black Country	W. Midlands	England
	No.	% of female working age population		
aged under 25	170	0.2	0.2	0.2
aged 25-34	30	0.0	0.0	0.0
aged 35-44	20	0.0	0.0	0.0
aged 45-54	20	0.0	0.0	0.0
aged 55-59	30	0.0	0.0	0.0
aged 60-64 ~	-	-	-	-

Source: DWP Benefits, NOMIS

Carers and Other Income Related Benefits Summary

- Walsall has a higher level of carers claiming benefits than regionally and nationally, with the majority in receipt of Carer Allowance. With around 2,880 claimants in this group, carers are a small but important group within the working age population.
- There is an above average male and female claimant rate, although the numbers related to the female cohort are higher with 69% of carers claiming benefits.
- There are an above average proportion of male carers claiming benefits in Walsall across the majority of age groups with the largest group being those aged 45-54.
- Similarly the female claimant count is above average for the majority of age groups and in particular those ages 25-34 and 55-59. Although in terms of scale the largest female groups are those aged 35-44 and 45-54.
- Further, as with JSA and IB there is an east west divide in the Borough, with greater concentrations of carers claiming benefits in the centre and to the west of Walsall.
- The majority of claimants in this group are male (76%) and the male claimant rate is higher than the regional and national average especially for those aged 60-64, who account for the majority of male claimants (89%).

Barriers to work

This section explores the barriers to work in more detail, and expands on the comments made in the previous section. Based on research, anecdotal evidence and other information from Walsall based activities and those elsewhere which are aimed at reducing worklessness, barriers to work can be subdivided into the follow three categories:

Supply-side factors (the skills, qualifications and attitudes of workless people)

Demand-side factors (the number, type and location of jobs and local recruitment practices)

Institutional factors (the way in which housing markets, transport systems, childcare availability, etc. work to support or hinder access to work)

Supply side barriers

The most obvious supply-side barrier is a lack of skills in relation to those demanded by employers as qualification levels are significantly lower among the workless population. Anecdotal evidence from Walsall based providers illustrates that the following issues are relevant:

- Individuals with low formal skills are unaware of the changing demands of employers.
- Expectations of individuals are not comparable with the employment opportunities that are available.
- Many individuals lack the skills necessary to successfully engage with recruitment activities, such as job search or completing application forms.
- Available employment opportunities do not match what unemployed people are searching for locally.
- Lower level skilled roles / vacancies are being taken up by higher skilled people, thereby reducing opportunities for those that would traditionally fill these roles.

Impact of social exclusion on life outcomes

Despite programmes to support socially excluded families, problems remain:

- People with no qualifications are seven times more likely to be unemployed and 5 times more likely to be low paid than those with higher education.

Young People are significantly at risk of underachieving in higher as evidence shows:

- Only 15% of young people from unskilled family backgrounds begin higher education by the age of 21 compared with 79% of young people from a professional family background.

The unemployed face barriers and problems in taking up job opportunities, including:

- Care for children and other family members.
- Cost of transport or difficulty in access to available employment.
- Training or education courses to address social and basic skills.
- Lack of information, confidence, and poor job search skills.
- Poor presentation and interview skills.
- Lack of recent work experience.
- Behavioural problems, including mental illness and substance use.
- Record of offending.

Physical and mental health

There is a significant geographic divide between the health experiences of those living in the east and those in the west of the borough. This inequality is manifest as an 8 year difference in the life expectancy between the most deprived and the least deprived wards. In addition, those in the east are more likely to suffer high teenage pregnancy rates, high levels of obesity and unhealthy eating,

limited physical exercise and 20% of residents are living with incomes only found in the poorest 10% of the nation's population (Walsall Health Inequalities Strategy 2008-12). This evidence is further supported by high levels of IB and ESA claimants in Walsall.

The Annual Population Survey (February 2010) and anecdotal evidence from service providers indicates that benefit claimants have limited desire to seek work, reflecting frequent long-term detachment from the labour market. It is likely that in some cases, employer discrimination (or perceptions that employers may be discriminatory) towards those with physical or mental disabilities also hampers the ability of some to find employment.

Attitudinal and aspirational barriers

Research has highlighted a number of barriers to engagement in employment and education in the West Midlands, and consequently highlights issues for the priority areas in Walsall. A large range of socio-economic factors directly impact on an individual's chances of participation in education. These factors are often inter-linked and more than one can be present in an individual.

These factors are:

- Lacking formal qualifications
- Lacking basic skills
- Having caring responsibilities
- Having a low household income
- Having a work limiting disability
- Having left school at 16
- Coming from a minority ethnic community
- Being unemployed/benefit dependant
- Being a lone parent
- Being older than 50

These factors impact on success in the labour market but there are also other structural barriers in relation to the labour market.

Barriers older People

This indicates that among older people involuntary 'push' factors such as redundancy, health problems and caring responsibilities and 'pull' factors such as having financial security contribute to disengagement from employment and learning.

Barriers for young people

Young people in Walsall face similar barriers to those living in comparative districts across the country, namely issues related to educational attainment, attitude and motivation. There is also a significant and growing barrier relating to access to employment opportunities, as they are facing increased competition from more experienced individuals. This then reinforce negative attitudes and poor confidence, and creating more complex barriers towards education, training and employment.

Barriers affecting lone parents and families on low income

The Walsall gap relative to the national average for lone parents is 5.3% worse, and for over 50s, 8.1% worse. The picture for ethnic minorities is better than average (+3.2%), but the scale of the gap remains marked. National research further shows that:

- women as a group are 23% less likely on average to be in work
- disabled people 29% - and lower for people with mental health conditions and learning disabilities

Many families experience difficulties in re-entering the workforce after starting families. A number of practical barriers exist to the engagement of lone parents and families on low incomes in the labour market. These include affordable childcare, transport, retraining, the recognition of skills after an extended absence from the workforce and flexible working hours.

Many workless residents in Walsall have indicated that whilst they would like to work, their view of being in work is overshadowed by family and cultural pressures, especially where multi generational worklessness exists creating a situation where negative attitudes and aspirations dominate. There is also the view that the employment opportunities available are limited to low paid, low skills and short duration, and this adds to, and reinforces the poor attitude and low aspirations.

Cross cutting issues are:

- Poor access to benefit advice, childcare information, travel information. The challenge is to improve the match between what local residents have to offer and what employers increasingly require.
- Sustained employment in better jobs is required to make greater inroads in tackling persistent disadvantage. May be difficult as jobs in most sectors have declined; only skilled trades' occupations, process plant and machine operatives and elementary occupations have shown any real increase in jobs advertised.

Other issues:

- There are few dominant employers situated away from the town centre, creating a situation where there is emphasis on smaller businesses to provide local employment
- The challenge is to improve the match between what local residents have to offer and what employers increasingly require.
- sustained employment in better jobs is required to make greater inroads in tackling persistent disadvantage

From discussions with partners and service providers locally, the collection of management information is seen as important to measure and monitor activities effectively. However, what has become clear is the fact that similar information is collected by the majority of partners and service providers, but the ability to share or interrogate the information for the benefit of the client is extremely limited or none existent. This also limits the ability of service providers to map the route of the client effectively so that gaps and duplication are identified across the clients' journey.

Informal Economy

The value and the impact of the informal economy have not been measured in Walsall or the particular priority areas but may have an impact. Studies have been carried out nationally and they throw up a number of issues that resonate with the situation that can be found in the four of the boroughs priority wards. A study for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation identified some key factors around participation in the informal economy:

- low benefit rates
- low wages
- rules that restrict the number of hours people can work
- more informal opportunities than formal for those with low skill levels
- tax and benefit system de-incentivising a return to formal work
- finding informal work is often easy and quicker than formal work
- using social networks to find work overcomes confidence issues that may restrict formal employment.

The impact of the informal economy on the willingness of workless people to access employment is debatable, with some studies suggesting that informal economic activity is often supplementary to

formal work and “tends not to exist as a separate world outside the formal economy [but] helps individuals manage low pay and instability associated with some legitimate forms of work”.

Demand side barriers

The most obvious demand side barrier is an aggregate lack of employment opportunities. Given that in general as worklessness rises, so does the proportion of claimant unemployment within its composition, a lack of available work would seem to be an important factor. The vacancies reported to JCP generally equate to 30% of the vacancies available across all sectors, and there has been a general decline in the number of vacancies available between 2008 and 2010, whilst there has been an increase between 2010 and 2011, the numbers are now declining more rapidly. In addition, job density as decreased so competition for accessing employment increases.

Partner organisations have highlighted that local employers are less likely to consider the experience of the potential employee, and prefer to concentrate on their attitude towards work. The motivation and social skills exhibited by the potential employee is a more relevant measure for selection. A major barrier to work is suitable work experience, and other barriers mentioned by partners include basic skills, attitude towards work, rates of pay, debt management, transport and access to suitable childcare provision (available at the times needed to work around work commitments).

In addition, access to benefit surgeries has been highlighted as a significant gap, particularly in relation to carrying out “better off calculations” to illustrate the benefit of work. A lack of jobs appropriate to the skills of the workless population is also relevant.

Institutional barriers

Research into barriers to work in worklessness programmes elsewhere in Britain identified five main institutional barriers:

Firstly, the dynamics of the housing market in local areas. This particularly relates to the tendency of people in work to leave the areas in which they previously lived, while those who remain on benefits stay, and for migrants to areas of high worklessness to often be workless themselves.

Secondly, the ‘benefits trap’, linked with some of the cultural and aspirational barriers cited earlier and associated with the significant costs that may be linked with starting work and the consequent loss of benefits and the difficulty of overcoming some of the initial costs. Set against this, some programmes have identified an over-estimation on the part of some benefit recipients of the extent of the financial benefits trap (for example through an underestimation of the gains through tax credit).

Linked with this, many are discouraged from taking up short-term or insecure posts because of the complications (and potential financial cost) of reapplying for benefits when the post comes to an end.

Thirdly, access to childcare. Obviously, this overlaps with the wider benefits trap, given the cost of childcare, and the fact that many parents are trapped in needing childcare to access work, but being unable to afford it until they are in work. Childcare may also as a barrier to sustainable work (given the difficulties of managing work on limited childcare). The provision of childcare vouchers has had a positive effect on parents returning to work, but the overall cost of childcare amounts to a significant drain on family incomes. There is also low take up for Child Tax Credits, which if accessed would potentially alleviate some of the financial burden. Similarly, some families that are eligible for free school meals do not access them, and this also could contribute to the financial burden.

Fourthly, spatial mobility and physical access to work. This barrier seems to have two dimensions. Firstly, the ability to actually get to places of work, which evaluations of programmes in urban areas suggest is not a particularly major barrier, albeit that the cost and convenience of public transport can obviously restrict access to work.

However, this may not be the case, with local practitioners noting that lack of transport is a significant barrier, especially given the number of concentrations of employment on business parks relatively inaccessible by public transport. The second dimension links to the aspirational and cultural barriers cited above and the willingness of people to travel beyond their neighbourhoods. Again, evaluations of programmes elsewhere suggest that a lack of willingness to travel (at least in urban areas where public transport options are viable) is somewhat overstated, although it is cited as an important barrier locally.

Public transport in Walsall is constrained by services that follow routes and operational timings based on historic employment patterns and shift patterns. The majority of services start and finish in Walsall town centre using the strategic highway network and linking traditional housing areas, and this does not allow for easy north south or east west travel without travelling to the town centre. Bus services also generally operate between 0530 and 2300 during weekdays and more limited timetables at weekends and public holidays. Changing employment patterns away from the traditional 9 to 5 Monday to Friday towards part time and shift work spread across the week.

Transport provision can potentially play an important role in influencing many of the outcomes that are enveloped by the concept of social exclusion since, in most instances, *inclusion* implies *participation* in processes and activities (*e.g.* labour markets, social services, social networks *etc*) and this participation will often in turn depend upon *physical access* to the relevant facilities (Social Inclusion: Transport aspects; March 2006, Department for Transport).

Walsall is compact from the perspective of the 15% most deprived wards, and individuals who are disadvantaged often experience serious difficulties in getting around and are much less likely to have access to a car. Moreover, regular and reliable public transport services are not available or at least readily accessible in every community; are often unaffordable for people on low incomes or do not take people to where they want to travel. Walking and cycling may not be suitable options for accessing (critical) services, such as health care, learning, shops and post offices, which are distant or in environments where traffic levels and accident rates are high.

Lack of transport or access to transport services disproportionately affects the lower socio-economic groups, women, ethnic minorities, children, the elderly and those with impaired mobility. As an example, healthy foods are more readily and more cheaply purchased in large shopping centres, and the price differential between healthy and unhealthy foods is greatest in the shops used by poorer people.

Walsall is compact from the perspective of the 15% most deprived wards, such that access to Manor Hospital, for example, is not unduly difficult (with the exception of Willenhall South and Darlaston in the extreme south west of the borough; and the small pocket of deprivation within Brownhills in the extreme north east).

Knock on effect of public sector cuts

The abolition of Primary Care Trusts (PCTs), the Regional Development Agency, Government Office for West Midlands, reduction in permanent and fixed-term staff in Department of Work and Pensions, the Skills Funding Agency and public sector cuts expected in local authorities is likely to result in an oversupply of professional workers with no clear routes back to employment.

There is also possibility that there may be less funding available to spend on non essential services and goods. Moreover, the low confidence level amongst those in work will also impact on suppliers and companies. The cancellation of Building Schools for the Future programme will have detrimental effect on supply chain and in particular the construction sectors.

Overall there is also an opportunity to learn more about the small pockets of hardcore deprivation and the effects resulting in poor work ethics. Moreover, socially excluded families may not see the connection between higher skills, education or value of qualifications – resulting in sustained cycle of unemployment. Other barriers could be as due to - lack of motivation amongst the jobseekers; benefits processing problems; poor awareness of in-work benefits, lack of knowledge about Changes in Child Support Agency and losing benefits such as school meals and prescriptions.

Financial Exclusion to Inclusion

A widely used definition of financial inclusion is the *'inability, difficulty or reluctance to access appropriate so called mainstream, financial service.*

Financial exclusion is experienced by many families and individuals of any age, living on low incomes as they are often unable to access mainstream and transactional banking services e.g. high street bank loans, banks accounts with direct debit facilities. As a result cannot benefit from the 'electronic economy' such as debit cards, internet banking, direct debit facilities that provide the means pay bills and utilities cheaper, and on a budgeted basis.

Financial exclusion is caused by a number of complex factors: such as geography, illness, poor credit history, historic long-term in-debtedness and difficulty proving identity. The complexity makes it difficult to tackle requiring approaches that require addressing a number of different issues. The groups most at risk of experiencing financial exclusion are:

- benefit claimants
- low income
- young people not in training, employment or education
- those experiencing mental health problems
- carers
- people with disabilities
- people living in areas of high deprivation and child poverty, homeless individuals and families.

By tackling worklessness our key objective is to enable residents to be better able to access and sustain employment. This will also enable residents to be more able to manage their money on a day to day basis, and plan more effectively for the future.

Impact of financial exclusion

- Families/households pay higher rates for utilities, which based on recent news report are rising, e.g. British gas rises of approximately 7% (November 2010, BBC)
- Households do not have home contents insurance, vulnerable to crime and in-debtedness
- Rising in-debtedness evidenced by increase in door-stop lending and shark loan activity and households/individuals having multiple debts

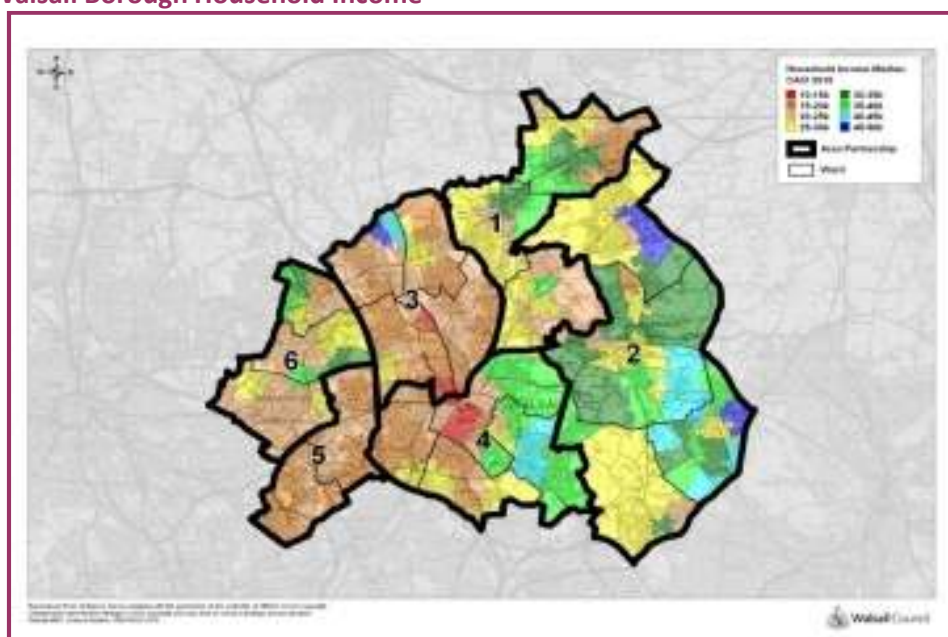
At risk of financial exclusion?

Households and communities at risk of experiencing financial exclusion are often low income, benefit dependent and experience multiple deprivation. Analysing the Household Median Income levels by community across Walsall, and households claiming out-of-work benefits, indicates that the most risk wards and communities are:

- **St Matthews, Blakenall and Birchills Leamore** are the three wards that have:
 - Households where the median income levels fall within the lowest band £10k-£15k
 - Large proportions of households with second lowest median income of £15-20k
 - The highest proportion of residents claiming out of work benefits in 2010.
- **Darlaston South and Bentley and Darlaston North**, while do not have a household income levels that fall within the lowest range, in general wards have only low income households. The median household income bands are either 15-20k or 20-25k.
- **Bloxwich East and Bloxwich West** – both wards have a large proportion of the households in low income bracket.

These areas are the same wards and communities where older people and children living in income deprived reside, and communities that experience income deprivation, employment and multiple deprivations reside.

Map 7 – Walsall Borough Household Income



Access to Mainstream Banking Services

Limited ability to access, or unable to access, mainstream banking services, in particular a transaction bank account act as a barrier to employment. Employers require a bank account for payment of wages. Individuals often do not meet the criteria for one or more reasons: lack of a sound credit history, may not have steady employment, may not have appropriate documentation for proving identity so cannot have a credit check completed or may have a previous record of fraud, bankruptcy or bad debts.

There is anecdotal evidence that shows vulnerable groups, such as offenders, have difficulty receiving wages or opening a bank account due to their criminal history. In the west of the Borough there are communities where 15% or more of the working age population do not have access to a mainstream current account. Key areas affected are Blakenall, St Matthews, Palfrey, Pleck, Bentley and Darlaston North, Darlaston South and Bloxwich West. These are all wards and communities also experience low income levels, high number of benefit dependent households and high rates of individuals unemployed or workless.

Barriers to Work Summary

- Understanding the barriers
 - *Supply-side* factors (the skills, qualifications and attitudes of workless people)
 - *Demand-side* factors (the number, type and location of jobs and local recruitment practices)
 - *Institutional* factors (the way in which housing markets, transport systems, childcare availability, etc. work to support or hinder access to work)
- The most obvious supply-side barrier is a lack of skills in relation to those demanded by employers as qualification levels are significantly lower among the workless population.
- Individuals with low formal skills are unaware of the changing demands of employers.
- The main barriers include:
 - Cost of transport or difficulty in access to available employment.
 - Lack of information, confidence, and poor job search skills.
 - Poor presentation and interview skills.
 - Lack of recent work experience.
 - Lacking of basic skills and / or formal qualifications
 - Having a low household income
 - Being unemployed/benefit dependant
 - Access to childcare that meets their needs in terms of time, location and duration
 - Reduced Public Sector spending on services will impact on availability of support
- Effect of the Informal Economy
 - more informal opportunities than formal for those with low skill levels
 - tax and benefit system de-incentivising a return to formal work
 - finding informal work is often easy and quicker than formal work
- Financial Exclusion
 - Households and communities at risk of experiencing financial exclusion are often low income, benefit dependent and experience multiple deprivation
 - Families/households pay higher rates for utilities, which based on recent news report are rising, e.g. British gas rises of approximately 7% (November 2010, BBC)
 - Households do not have home contents insurance, vulnerable to crime and indebtedness
 - Rising in-debtedness evidenced by increase in door-stop lending and shark loan activity and households/individuals having multiple debts
 - Limited ability to access, or unable to access, mainstream banking services, in particular a transaction bank account act as a barrier to employment. Employers require a bank account for payment of wages.

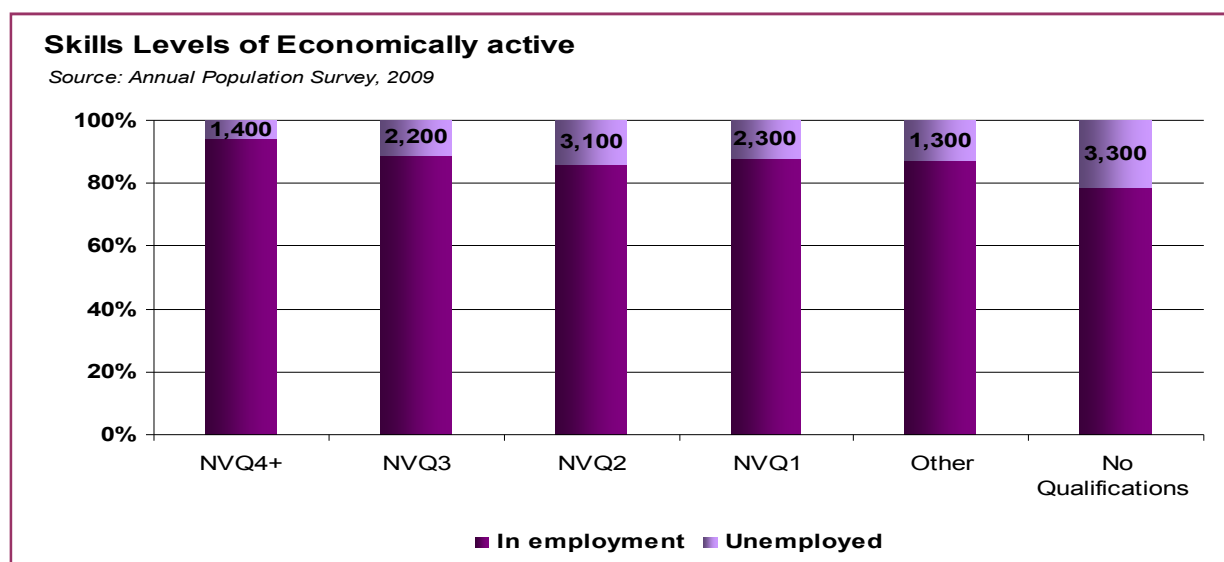
Skills

Unemployment and Skills

Skills levels are a key determinant of the quality of the workforce available to employers. A local labour market provides employers with a crucial resource to draw upon and creates a market for goods and services produced locally. It is therefore important that the skills of residents match employer demand. Analysis of the skills levels of the unemployed highlights areas where there may be a lack of appropriate jobs for people of that skills level, or equally where residents do not have the necessary skills levels required by employers.

In December 2009, 14,200 residents were unemployed in Walsall. The two largest groups within this were those with NVQ2 qualifications (3,100) or those with no qualifications (3,300). Those with lower levels of qualifications were more likely to be unemployed than those with higher qualifications. That is, 21% of those who are economically active with no qualification were unemployed in 2009 compared to 6% of those with NVQ4.

Chart 11 – Skills Levels of Economically Active



The effect of the overall lack of jobs in Walsall can be seen when unemployment at each skills level is expressed as a proportion of the total number of working age residents which hold qualifications at that level. It is apparent that Walsall faces unemployment issues across all skills levels and that jobs at all levels are required to increase employment – even amongst those with higher level qualifications, unemployment is higher in Walsall (5%) than in the region and nationally (4%).

This is particularly the case in relation to those with NVQ Level 2 qualifications, with 11% of the working age population within this group being unemployed compared to 7% nationally. As well as creating employment opportunities for those with lower level skills it will also be appropriate to up skill residents to fill higher skilled positions, which may be created in the Borough and where unemployment levels are lower.

For Walsall, 11% of the working age population holds no qualifications, which although lower than the Black Country levels is still higher than the figures for West Midlands and England (Table 41).

Table 41 – Unemployed by Skills Level**Unemployment By Skills Level Dec 2009**

Age		Walsall	Black Country	W. Midlands	England
	No.	% of working age population at skills level that are Unemployed			
NVQ4+	1,400	5	5	4	4
NVQ3	2,200	9	9	6	6
NVQ2	3,100	11	10	8	7
NVQ1	2,300	9	12	11	9
Other qualification	1,300	9	10	6	6
No qualifications	3,300	11	12	10	8

Source: Annual Population Survey

Working Age Qualifications**Table 42 -Qualification levels achieved by Walsall residents**

Qualification level	Walsall	Walsall	West Midlands	Great Britain
	No.	%	(%)	(%)
Level 4 and above	27,700	17.6	24.8	29.9
Level 3	30,100	19.2	19	19.4
Level 2	28,600	18.2	17.1	16.1
Level 1	25,000	15.9	14.7	13.5
Other qualification	14,300	9.1	8.2	8.8
No qualifications	31,200	19.9	16.2	12.3

Source: ONS Labour Market Information (January 2009 to December 2010)

Table 42 shows that Walsall has a greater proportion of residents whose highest level of qualification is at Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications compared to the West Midlands and in Great Britain. The significance of this becomes apparent when employment in the Borough and current vacancies requirements are considered.

Table 43 -A comparison of employment, labour supply, vacancies by qualification level in Walsall

All figures are %	Level 4 and above	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1 and below
Employment	27.9	26.6	33.4	12
Qualifications held by Walsall residents	17.6	19.2	18.2	44.8
Vacancies	11.9	32.6	39.1	16.4

Source: ONS Labour Market Information (January 2009 to December 2010)

For Walsall 60% of people in employment hold level 2 or level 3 skills while over 70 percent of vacancies advertised in Walsall are for jobs requiring skills at level 2 or level 3 skills. Therefore, in main for Walsall it is at level 2 or level 3 that the greatest deficit in residents' qualifications for jobs exists.

When considering worklessness in Walsall it is important to take a short term view in the first instance. However, when looking to the future and the predicted changes in the jobs profile across the skills / qualifications levels there are significant challenges faced by those who are out of work now and who want to find employment in Walsall.

For Walsall, it is also critically important to consider the impact of these predicted changes in Jobs profile across the skills and qualifications. It is assumed that the jobs requiring level 4 skills are generally seen as professional and senior management roles. Moreover, jobs at level 3 often have a supervisory management role. Therefore, for Walsall, with 28% of jobs at level 4 and assuming that each level 4 job has a management role covering only 3-4 people, it could be said that for each new job at level 4 it will be accompanied by 3-4 jobs at levels 3 and below. For example, in high technology manufacturing a high skilled designer needs support staff to produce detailed specifications and drawings. For Walsall, it can be assumed that while the number of higher skilled jobs will increase, there will be more jobs at lower levels and therefore, proportions of higher skilled jobs may not increase at the same rate.

Moreover, a significant proportion of the level 4 jobs in Walsall may be filled by individuals who live outside the Borough – that is higher salaried earn in Walsall and spent outside. However, at the other end of the skills spectrum Walsall residents on lower salaries and wages work outside the Borough and spend in Walsall. The net effect is that Walsall's GDP is reduced from what it could be if all Walsall jobs were filled by Walsall residents.

Therefore, it can be further concluded that low skilled residents of Walsall, particularly those at level 1 and below must be targeted to raise their skills from level 1 to level 2 and those currently at level 2 to level 3. Moreover, there needs to be an urgent recognition of the impact on Walsall's economy through its own residents filling the majority of level 2 and level 3 vacancies in the Borough rather than individuals from outside the Borough. Additionally, the first key challenge to address worklessness in the Borough could be to raise the skills of those at level 1 to level 2. This drive to increase skills levels amongst Walsall residents' needs to be done with immediate focus (a possible 3 year window) otherwise employers may continue to revise their own location strategies and move to other Boroughs where labour with the necessary skills may be available.

Skills for life

There is significant research evidence available from different studies conducted over the last few years that the factors affecting an individual when progressing from one skill level to the next are (in order of significance):

- i the quality of the teaching and training;
- ii the development of literacy and numeracy skills up to at least level 2;
- iii the availability of social support whilst learning that help overcome the barriers to learning, for example the availability of free or heavily state subsidised training, alternatives to the often detrimental impact of training on benefits, training that is available at times and in locations that make it easy for individuals to participate in training, child-care facilities and an understanding of cultural attitudes to training, particularly for women.

It seems that from the above list, the most often overlooked is the second of these factors: the development of literacy and numeracy skills to level 2.

A major study by the government's Basic Skills Agency in the late 1990s mapped the national standards for literacy and numeracy at level 2 onto the standards for all of the popular VQs and NVQs at level 2 and level 3 across most sector-subject areas. This means that no one can meet the standards for a level 2 or level 3 VQ or NVQ without having literacy and numeracy skills at level 2.

Data for 2003 collected by the government's Basic Skills Strategy Unit that was part of the then Department for Education and Skills showed that, in the Black Country 17% of the working-aged population (aged 16-64) had literacy skills at Entry Level¹ and 56% had numeracy skills at Entry Level. Literacy and numeracy skills at this level rule people out from being considered for most jobs other than the lowest paid manual jobs.

The picture is little better for Level 1² literacy and numeracy. Again in the Black Country, 50% of the working-age population have literacy skills at Level 1 while only 33% have Level 1 numeracy skills.

To complete the picture for the Black Country, only 32% of the working-age population (less than one in three) has literacy skills at Level 2 and above (equivalent to at least a grade C in GCSE English) while only 11% (one in nine) of the working-age population have numeracy skills at Level 2 and above (equivalent to at least a grade C in GCSE Mathematics).

Even those with literacy and/or numeracy skills at level 1 and below that are in work will find it difficult to progress to jobs requiring a higher skill level as there is a direct and positive correlation between literacy and numeracy skills and vocational skills up to at least level 2.

The picture is improving for those at age 16 where, in Walsall, 55.2% of 16 year olds achieve both GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics at grade C and above. However, this still means that just under half of all 16 year olds in Walsall are leaving compulsory education without the necessary literacy and numeracy skills to achieve a level-2 vocational qualification. Many of these young people, as well as their elders, need significant post-16 literacy and numeracy training if they are to be equipped for life in the workplace. This means that around 1,650 16 year olds per year from Walsall schools are entering work or post-16 education and training with literacy and numeracy skills at level 1 or below.

The working age population of Walsall in 2009 was 157,700. Of these 113,500 were economically active. Approximately 76,000 of the economically active population had literacy at level 1 and below while approximately 101,000 had numeracy skills at level 1 and below.

In the 2009/10 academic year, the two largest public-funded providers of literacy and numeracy provision in Walsall, Walsall College and Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council, through Walsall Adult and Community Learning College, helped young people and adults achieve 2,200 qualifications in literacy and numeracy (of which approximately 600 were achieved by young people). This corresponds to between 1,100 individuals (if all of them achieved both literacy and a numeracy qualification) and 2,200 individuals (if all of them achieved either literacy or a numeracy qualification). Also these qualifications are spread across Entry Level, Level 1 and Level 2.

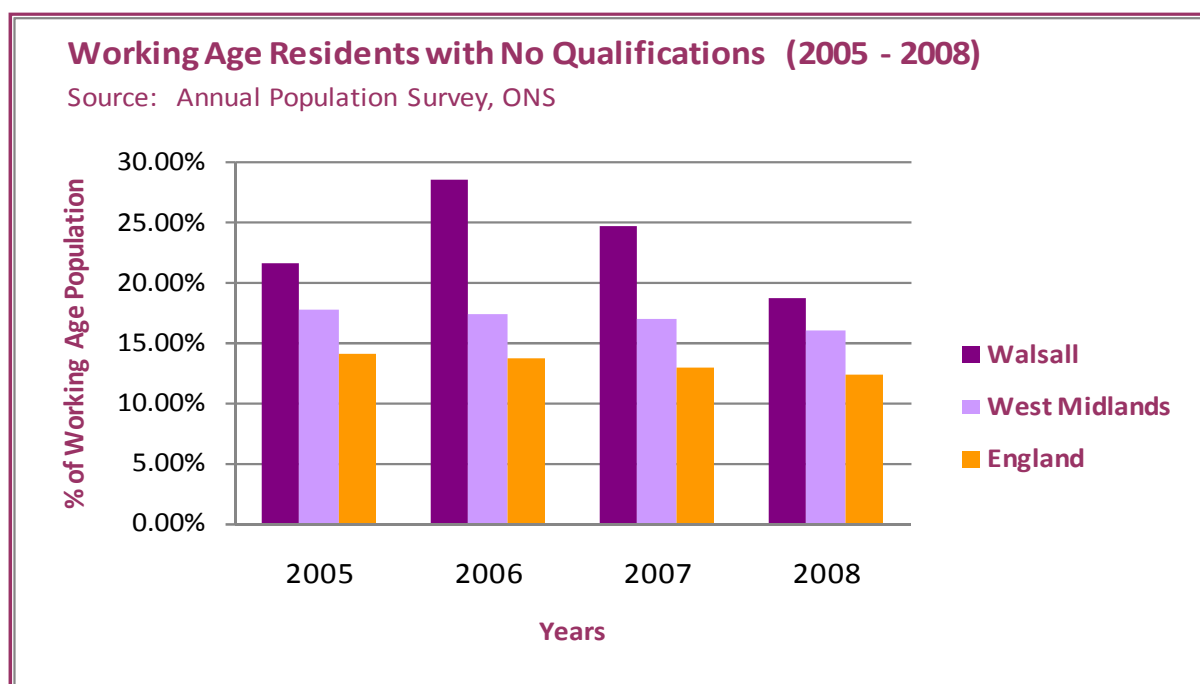
Given the number of young people leaving compulsory education each year with levels of literacy and numeracy below level 2 and the probable number of Walsall residents with insufficient literacy and numeracy skills to progress into level 2 jobs, this amount of literacy and numeracy training appears woefully short of that needed address the skills shortage in Walsall.

It is strongly recommended that any plan to address worklessness in Walsall addresses the improvement of literacy and numeracy skills among the large majority residents of Walsall as its major priority combined with the introduction of those measures necessary to break down the barriers to learning. Good literacy and numeracy skills make learning vocational skills so much easier and must come first in any plan to attack worklessness.

¹ The top of Entry Level, Entry 3 is the expected standard for an 11 year old.

² Level 1 literacy and numeracy correspond to the expected standard for a 14 year old.

Chart 12 – Comparison of Working Age Residents with No Qualifications

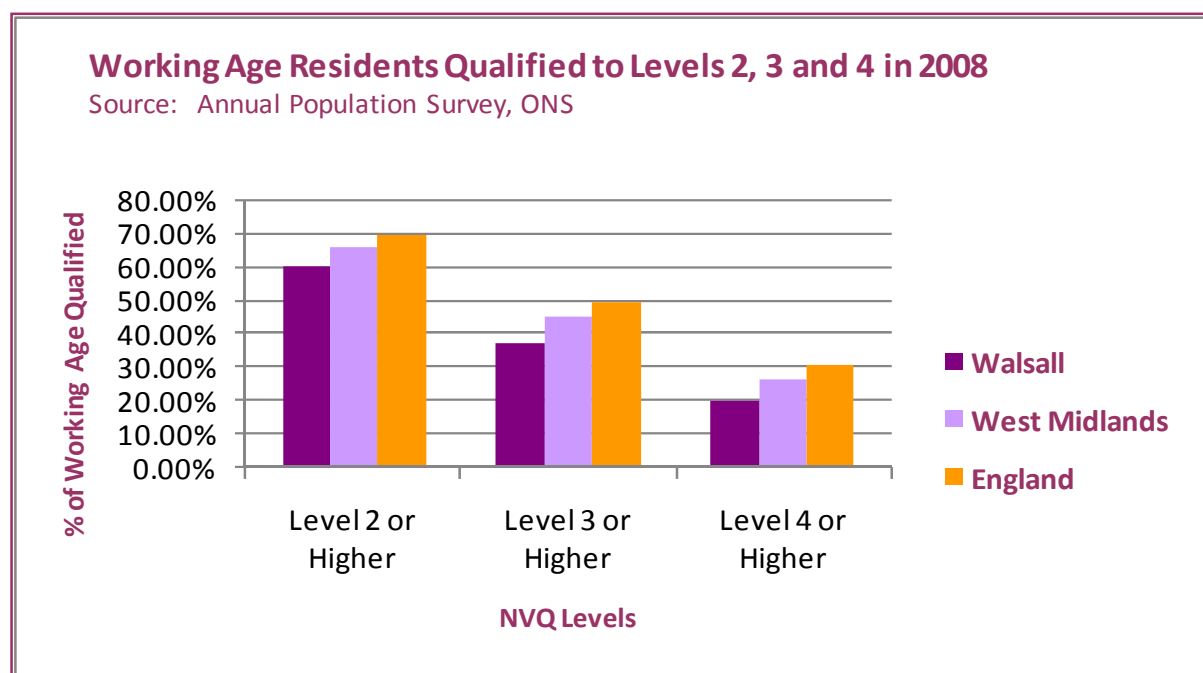


Overall, whilst Walsall continues to improve the averages for qualifications amongst the working age population, it still lags both the regional and national average for levels 2, 3 and 4 qualifications amongst the working age population.

There are pockets of deprivation where levels of qualifications are substantially lower with 13% for the working age population residing in the most deprived 20% of areas nationally. However, over the last six years, the proportion of the Walsall population with no qualifications has fallen – from 15.8% in 2001 to 12.5% in 2008. The proportion of the regional working age population with no qualifications has also fallen but is still significantly higher than it is in Walsall.

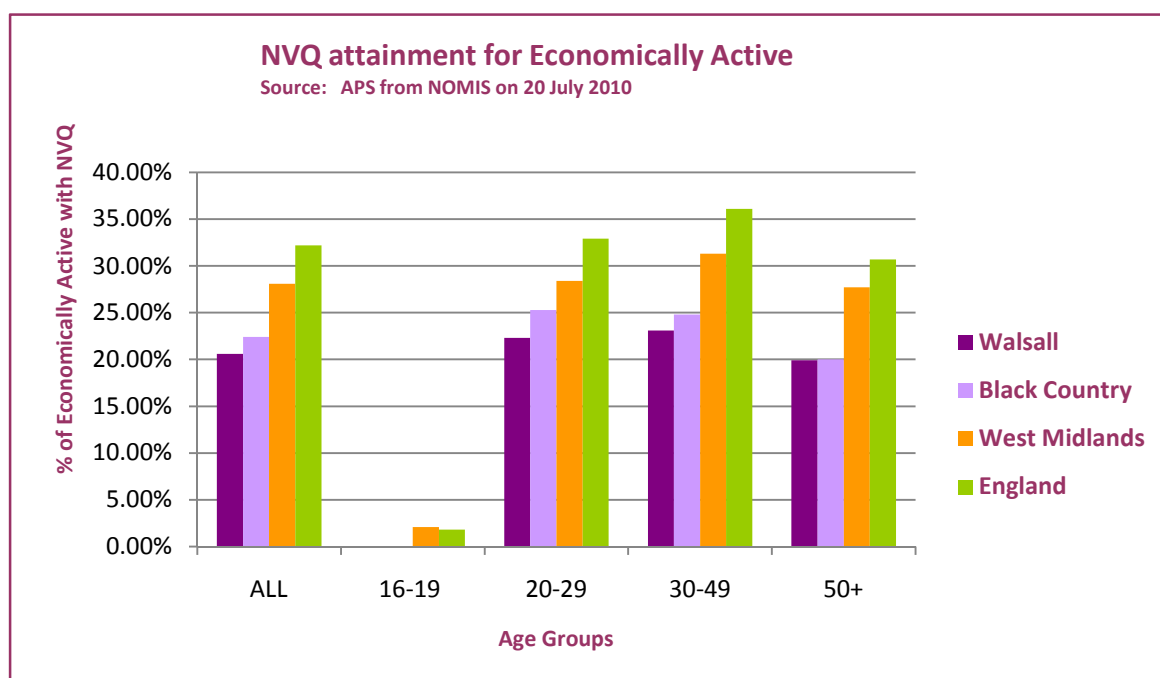
Walsall has a lower proportion of residents with qualifications at all levels and has very few highly skilled residents who have qualifications at Level 4 or above. According to the figures from the Annual Population survey (2008), 20.2% of adults living in the borough have qualifications at Level 4 or higher, compared with 26.2% regionally and 30.5% nationally. Similarly, figures from Annual Population survey (2008), for both Level 2 and Level 3 are below regional and national levels.

Chart 13 – Comparison of Working Age Residents Qualified to Levels 2, 3 and 4



The data for economically active population with NVQ Level 4 attainment indicates that Walsall is behind overall averages for Black Country, West Midlands and England.

Chart 14 – Comparison of Economically Active with NVQ Level 4+



The closer examination of Walsall data, reveals higher than average rates of qualifications at NVQ 4 and above in the 30-49 age group which is consistent with the comparatively high number of managers, senior officials and professional that reside within Walsall but work outside Walsall. For the 50+ age group, the Walsall averages for NVQ4 qualifications is similar to the Black Country averages but lags behind regional and national averages.

Table 44 – Percentage of Walsall Residents Economically Active with NVQ level 3**% of Walsall Residents Economically Active with NVQ Level 3 Only**

	Walsall	Black Country	West Midlands	England
ALL	15.00%	15.30%	16.70%	16.10%
16 - 19 Yrs	20.90%	17.60%	22.40%	23.80%
20 - 29 Yrs	18.30%	19.30%	21.00%	21.30%
30 - 49 Yrs	15.40%	14.40%	16.10%	14.30%
50 - Retirement	9.30%	12.50%	12.60%	13.10%

Source: APS from NOMIS, July 2010

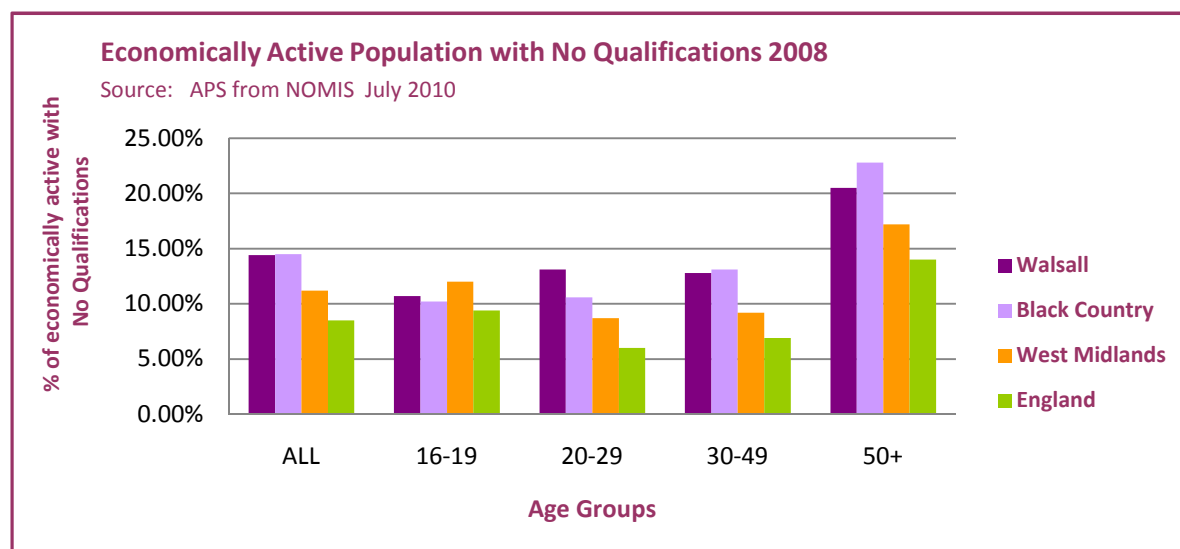
In the main for Walsall, 15% of the population was economically active with NVQ Level 3 only, while in Black Country economically active with NVQ Level 3 only was at 15.30%, while for West Midlands and England it has 16.70% and 16.10 % respectively. Additionally, 16 - 19 Years age group represented higher proportion of NVQ Level 3 holders. The scenario for the NVQ level 2 holders in Walsall is slightly different.

Table 45 - Percentage of Walsall Residents Economically Active with NVQ level 2**% of Walsall Residents Economically Active with NVQ Level 2 Only**

	Walsall	Black Country	West Midlands	England
ALL	19.30%	19.30%	17.60%	16.00%
16 - 19 Yrs	41.20%	39.40%	38.90%	38.20%
20 - 29 Yrs	19.90%	21.00%	18.20%	16.50%
30 - 49 Yrs	19.30%	19.80%	17.40%	15.20%
50 - Retirement	12.50%	10.80%	12.50%	11.70%

Source: APS from NOMIS, July 2010

For Walsall 19.30% of the population was economically active with NVQ Level 2 only, while in the Black Country economically active with NVQ Level 2 only was at 19.30%, while for West Midlands and England 17.60% and 16.0% respectively. As expected the 16 - 19 Years age group represented higher proportion of NVQ Level 2 holders.

Chart 15 – Economically Active Population with no Qualifications

For Walsall 14.4% of the population was economically active with no Qualifications, similarly in Black Country that level was at 14.5%, 11.2% for West Midlands and 8.5% for England respectively. Moreover, for 50+ age group there were 20.5% were economically active with no qualifications, which is comparable to Black Country but higher than both West Midlands and England. Similarly, for 20 - 29 Years age group the economically active figure with no qualifications was 13.1%, which is higher than region and nationally.

For Walsall, education, skills and training are recognised as major contributors to future economic growth and success of the region. Developing a growing and sustainable economy depends on a workforce that is able to accommodate changing environments and advancing technology. Therefore in Walsall having low adult skill levels puts pressure on the economy through difficulties in recruitment, worklessness and low rates of progression. There is an opportunity for Walsall and Black Country agencies to work together to improve skills and aspirations to meet the demand for a sustainable economy.

It is important, therefore, to understand how employment and learning opportunities in the Black Country can enable and support Walsall residents to gain skills; find employment; and remain or progress in employment. It is also important to understand the demand for skills from employer's perspective and from growing sectors points of views to identify opportunities and areas for future skills investment.

Skills Targets for Walsall

In main for Walsall:

- 34% of working age population will need to be equipped with NVQ Level 4 or above by 2011 – an increase of almost 14% from 2008 levels;
- 56% of working age population will need to be equipped with NVQ Level 3 or above by 2011 – an increase of almost 19% from 2008 levels;
- 79% of working age population will need to be equipped with NVQ Level 2 or above by 2011 – an increase of almost 18.9% from 2008 levels.

Similarly, the West Midlands Economic Strategy and Skills Action Plan have ambitious targets to improve educational attainment by 2011 and by 2020:

- By 2011 – 34% of adults qualified to at least NVQ Level 4 and to be increased to 40% by 2020;
- By 2011 – 56% of adults qualified to at least NVQ Level 3 and to be increased to 68% by 2020;
- By 2011 – 79% of adults qualified to at least NVQ Level 2 and above and to be increased to 90% by 2020;

For Walsall it will nonetheless be a challenge to raise standards to target levels.

Table 46 – Skills Targets for Walsall by 2011

Skills Targets for Walsall by 2011		
	Walsall	West Midlands
NVQ Level 4 and above		
Number 2008	31,714	839,100
% working age population	20.2	27.1
% Target for 2011	34	34
Number needed to meet target	19,000	211,000
NVQ Level 3		
Number 2008	58,090	1,424,600
% working age population	37	46.5
% Target for 2011	56	56
Number needed to meet target	26,000	289,500
NVQ Level 2		
Number 2008	94,357	2,060,200
% working age population	60.1	67.3
% Target for 2011	79	79
Number needed to meet target	26,000	357,900
Source: Annual Population Survey		

Business Skills Needs in Walsall

A significant number of local businesses in Walsall have indicated that lack of skills as a barrier to recruiting new staff. Subsequently, a number of businesses have problems accessing staff with the appropriate higher level skills. The higher level skills shortages in Walsall means a significant number of employers in Walsall admit to having had at least one member of staff who was not fully proficient at their job.

Skill needs for growth sectors in Walsall

While, in actual terms, there are lower levels of unemployment amongst those with higher level skills when compared to the national average, Walsall faces unemployment issues across all skills levels, highlighting that jobs at all levels are required to increase employment.

More specifically, for the growth sectors in Walsall the main skills requirements areas are considered to be:

- Higher level – graduate/post graduate – skills for financial as well as service sectors and business specific technical skills;
- Leadership and management skills;
- Business development skills to exploit new market opportunities;
- ICT skills to exploit new technologies;
- Inter-personal skills such as communication, working in teams, problem solving skills.

Moreover, according to the Regional Skills Assessment 2009, in order to meet Skills Action Plan targets for 2011, Walsall will need:

- 19,000 more working age adults qualified to NVQ Level 4 or above;
- 26,000 more qualified to Level 3 or above;
- 26,000 more qualified to Level 2 or above.

Need for developing Workforce skills and Opportunities

Walsall faces a significant challenge to up-skill its workforce to meet the needs of a re-structured economy. It shares this challenge with many other areas which traditionally depended on manufacturing employment, including the other Black Country authorities.

The Borough has already experienced significant structural changes in its economic base and this process will continue as long-term competitive pressures results in a continued decline of manufacturing jobs. Replacing these jobs with private sector, knowledge intensive employment which can generate wealth will require a considerable improvement in the skills of the local workforce, including young people entering the workforce for the first time.

In simple terms, the better qualified an individual, the more likely they are to be in employment and the higher their level of earnings is likely to be. For employers, a more highly skilled workforce enables them to undertake higher value activities and strengthens their competitive position.

Walsall faces a challenge to increase the number of workers with higher level skills, and raise levels of participation in higher education both amongst young people and those in work. The absence of a town centre higher education institutions and proximity of other, more attractive urban areas may reduce Walsall's ability to attract and retain recent graduates.

In terms of opportunities, intelligence from Sector Skills Councils and Business Clusters indicates that businesses need support to help them exploit new technology, adapt to new legislation (notably relating to low carbon and sustainability issues), meet the demands of an ageing population and satisfy ever more demanding consumers.

In Walsall, this may potentially lead to a growing need for higher level technical skills specific to sectors, industries and individual businesses. In the main, this means:

- High value added manufacturing is a sector which requires additional skills level;
- In ICT there is likely to be a growing need for leadership and relationship management, project and programme management skills, business intelligence, information analytics and architecture skills and for a range of specific software skills;
- In creative and digital industries there is likely to be a need for skills in developing and exploiting digital content for a range of markets including film, television, games, audio and music, education, health, training, business planning; and Social Media.
- In medical technologies there is set to be a growing need for engineers with specialist expertise in new healthcare technology and for leadership and management skills;
- Across all occupations there will be a growing requirement for ICT skills to exploit the potential of new technology and interpersonal skills such as communication and working in teams, problem solving and customer service.
- Other areas of opportunities in Walsall are likely to be in - Financial businesses and professional services; Website management and recycling as well as Health and Social Care.

Changing Workforce Demographics

For Walsall while the business needs, key sectors and clusters are changing the following demographic changes are also taking place:

- Older people moving from urban areas to surrounding districts and beyond. Younger people moving in the opposite direction;
- Expansion of minority ethnic communities, many of which have young age profile in urban areas. These are likely to participate in education and training and more likely to be disadvantaged in the employment market;

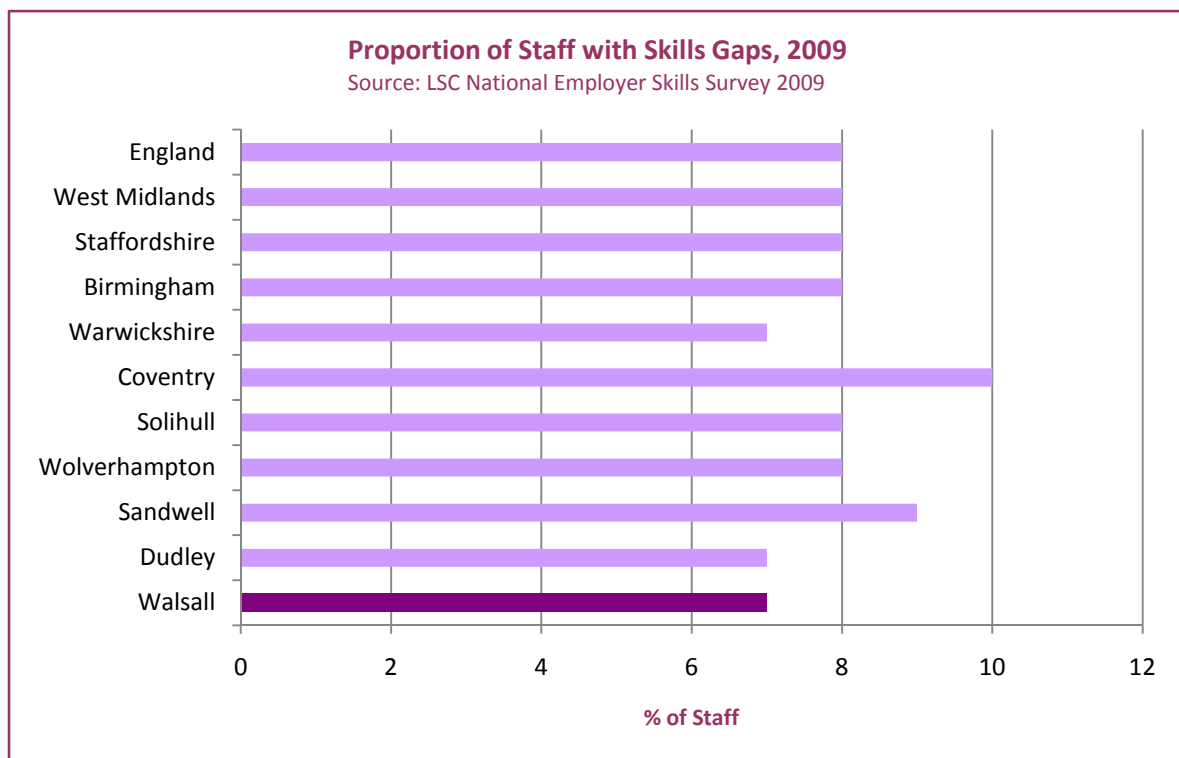
- Not in Employment, Education and Training (NEET) population tends to be particularly high in some wards – 16% was the rate of unemployment for 16-24 year olds in 2008;
- Employment rates for older people in Walsall are encouraging with 71% of adults aged 50 to retirement age in employment, close to regional average of 72%;
- 13% of the workforce in Walsall is from the Black Minorities and Ethnicities (BME) population, slightly higher than regional average. However, in the area only 57% are in paid employment compared to 72% of the white population.

Skills Gaps Comparisons

Overall, the trends for skills shortages nationally and regionally in West Midlands point to an increased demand for higher skills as the economy shifts away from sectors which rely more on process/plant and elementary occupations and into higher value added sectors. Although knowledge based industries make a smaller contribution to the Walsall economy than they do regionally or nationally, they are nonetheless expected to be the main focus of growth in the future, and this will translate into increasing demand for workers with NVQ level 4 and above qualifications. Hence, ambitious targets have been set by the West Midlands.

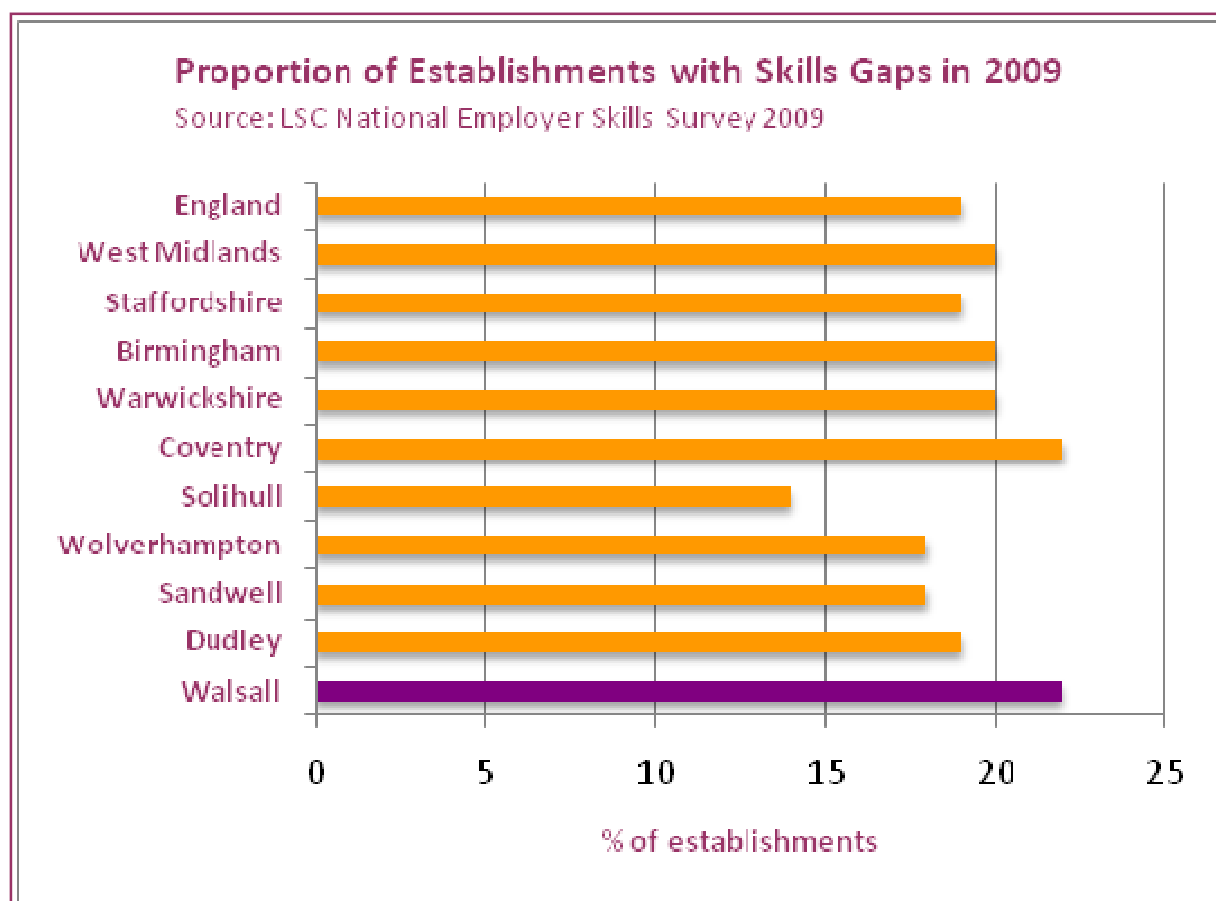
Since the educational achievements for the Walsall working age population are not high and therefore, there are still significant skills gaps. According to the 2009 National Employer Skills Survey (NESS 2009) some 7% of all employees in Walsall are not fully efficient at their job, which is referred to as skills gaps. This is below both regional and national averages and slightly lower than the Black Country average.

Chart 16 – Proportion of Staff with Skills Gaps



Although the number of staff with skills shortages in Walsall is comparatively low, a substantial fifth of all Walsall enterprise establishments do have some skills gaps which are higher than the regional or national average. That is, the number of businesses with the skills gap in Walsall is higher than the Black Country, West Midlands and England averages.

Chart 17 – Proportion of Establishments with Skills Gaps



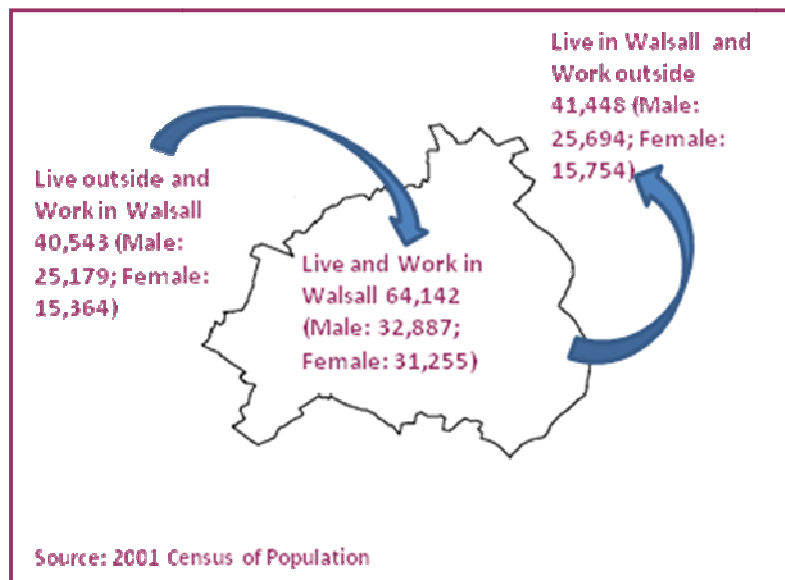
According to NESS nearly three-quarters of staff (73%) with skills gaps suffering from lack of experience have been recently recruited in Walsall. Generally in Walsall, businesses report a low level of staff turnover, which could explain why the percentage of staff with skills gaps is low compared with other areas. However, some occupations (e.g. sales) have a higher turnover rate as the best staff often leave in search of higher wage levels elsewhere. For Walsall businesses retaining young people is much more of a challenge, with businesses reporting a high level of young people leaving only 12-18 months after they have been put through training.

A lack of appropriate skills amongst staff is, however, viewed as a major challenge by Walsall employers as:

- Skills gaps are experienced by a significant number of employers (over 20 percent), and a significant proportion of the total workforce are considered to lack full proficiency.
- The skill sets required are becoming ever more sophisticated across most industry sectors.
- Despite sound educational achievements, school leavers tend to be lacking basic skills, for example in numeracy, spelling and letter writing. Many lack a basic work ethic, few have sound practical skills and there is a general lack of “work-readiness”

Travel to work patterns

The 2001 Census data provides most detailed information on Travel To Work Patterns for Walsall. This data further states that there was a net movement of 905 people working out of Walsall when the effect of people moving in and out of Walsall to work is considered. This suggests that the supply of labour outstrips demand in Walsall.



Overall, it is worth noting that Walsall has excellent private sector schools provisions and therefore, many of the residents may live in Walsall but travel out for work. Additionally, the excellent motorways network allows Walsall residents to access work opportunities regionally and travel to Birmingham.

Table 47 - Composition of Employment by Occupation, Walsall, 2001

Occupation	Live in Walsall but work outside	Live & work in Walsall	Live outside but work in Walsall	Net flow
Managers & Seniors	6,753	6,288	7,545	792
Professional Occupations	4,170	3,694	4,150	-20
Assoc Profess/Technical	5,564	5,158	4,882	-682
Admin. & Secretarial	5,932	7,407	4,757	-1,175
Skilled Trades	5,606	10,756	6,031	425
Personal Service	1,813	5,215	1,434	-379
Sales & customer service	2,586	5,252	2,276	-310
Process; plant & machine operatives	5,082	9,906	5,713	631
Elementary occupations	3,942	10,466	3,755	-187
All occupations	41,448	64,142	40,543	-905

Source: 2001 Census of Population (Standard Theme Table 10) © Crown Copyright

While analysing the data for the managerial and senior management occupations, there are more people coming from outside to work in Walsall. Since manufacturing continues to be a significant employer in Walsall, it is possible that some of these managers may possess highly specialised manufacturing specific skills. As for the administrative and secretarial occupations there are more people travelling out of Walsall and this may reflect the number of people travelling to work in Birmingham.

Table 48 - Composition of Employment by Industry, Walsall, 2001

Industry	Live in Walsall but work outside	Live & work in Walsall	Live outside but work in Walsall	Net flow
A;B. Agriculture; hunting & forestry; fishing;	123	251	82	-41
C. Mining and quarrying	53	30	18	-35
D. Manufacture	10,227	17,692	12,465	2,238
E. Electricity; gas & water	375	329	370	-5
F. Construction	2,772	4,923	2,351	-421
G. Wholesale & retail trade; repairs	7,402	12,240	8,065	663
H. Hotels & catering	1,158	2,986	833	-325
I. Transport; storage & communication	3,132	3,422	2,988	-144
J. Financial intermediation	2,019	1,027	801	-1,218
K. Real estate; renting & business	4,410	5,161	3,109	-1,301
L. Public administration & defence; social security	2,200	1,927	1,544	-656
M. Education	2,603	4,520	2,854	251
N. Health & social work	3,556	6,847	3,549	-7
O;P;Q. Other	1,419	2,787	1,514	95
All industries & services	41,449	64,142	40,543	-906

Source: 2001 Census of Population (Standard Theme Table 10) © Crown Copyright

As stated earlier, Manufacturing continues to be a significant employer in Walsall and according to the 2001 census, there were 2,238 people were travelling into Walsall. For Wholesale & Retail sector there are more people are coming in Walsall to work.

Some limited employment commuting data were produced in the Annual Population Survey in 2008 and it was found that the percentage of Walsall working residents working outside of the borough had risen from 43% in 2001 to 45.3% in 2008. The numbers behind these percentages were not available but it is likely that the net outflow of employees from Walsall had increased in 2008.

Training in Walsall

The latest NESS survey shows that Walsall employers are notably less likely to offer training than their regional or national counterparts, with less than a third having a training budget and less than two-thirds offering any form of training.

Table 49 – Training Activity by Local Authority Area

Training Activity by Local Authority Area, 2009					
	% with Training Plan	% with Training Budget	% Providing any Training	% Providing off-the-job Training	% Providing through FE Colleges
Walsall	44	36	62	51	21
West Midlands	45	35	68	51	21
England	43	36	68	51	19

Source: National Employers Skills Survey

In Walsall there is a notable gap between those employers providing any training at all, and those providing off-the-job training. That is, Walsall has the lower proportion of employers providing any training than Black Country, West Midlands and England and yet has one of the highest percentages for providing off-the-job training in the Black Country. The percentage of employers with a training plan is always higher than those with a training budget, again showing a gap this time between the planning and budgeting of training.

Any off-the-job training in the last 12 months increased across all areas between 2007 and 2009 and again the proportion of employers in the Black Country providing any off-the-job training was the lowest in 2007 (38 percent) but highest in 2009 (Walsall 51 percent).

Additionally, according to NESS survey the reasons for not providing training in West Midlands, the majority of employer's state that they do not provide any training because their staff are already fully proficient (59 percent), whilst 13 percent say there is no particular reason for not offering any training. All other reasons for not providing any training were cited by a relatively small percentage of employers (6 percent or less) and included cost, time and locality of premises.

Awareness, use of and satisfaction with training providers

Employers were asked about the type of training providers they use. Employers in the West Midlands were less likely to use FE colleges (21 percent compared to 26 percent) or other providers (39 percent compared to 51 percent) than the national average. Almost all employers using external providers for training were satisfied, with just 1 percent of establishments stating they were not at all satisfied with each of the provider types (FE, university and other). Satisfaction levels were marginally lower for FE colleges compared to universities and other providers.

Table 50 – %age of establishments to use different types of training providers in the last 12 months

% of establishments to use different types of training providers in the last 12 months		
Use Of	West Midlands	England
FE Colleges	21%	26%
Universities	8%	7%
Other Providers	39%	51%

Source: National Employers Skills Survey, 2009

Moreover, there is an evidence of collaboration between local colleges and employers encouraging links and confidence between highly skilled people and develop local opportunities, whilst also attracting investment from outside the sub-region.

Table 51 – Satisfaction of Employers using different training providers in Walsall

Satisfaction of employers when using different types of training providers

	Quite Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Not Very Satisfied	Not at all Satisfied
Satisfaction of Training Received at FE Colleges	33%	53%	7%	4%	1%
Satisfaction of Training Received at Universities	30%	62%	4%	2%	1%
Satisfaction of Training Received from Other Providers	30%	64%	3%	1%	1%

Source: National Employers Skills Survey, 2009

Overall, the employers are satisfied with the training providers in Walsall. It is notable that despite not having a local university there is a good level of satisfaction amongst Walsall employers. Moreover, the satisfaction from other training providers is at an even higher level and this might be due to a number of training providers specialising in the basic skills training and more directly linked to job than Further Education or Higher Education.

Awareness and use of Government training initiatives

Although more than half of Walsall employers were aware of the Train to Gain scheme, this awareness level was higher than it was in either the region or England and therefore, the participation rates for Walsall are higher. In contrast, for Walsall the level of awareness of the National Skills Academy is relatively high and the involvement remains low.

Table 52 – Awareness of Government Training Initiatives

Awareness and Use of Government Training Initiatives by Local Authority Area, 2009						
	% aware of Train to Gain	% involved with Train to Gain	% aware of the skills Pledge	% have made the Skills Pledge	% Aware of the National Skills Academy	% involved with the National Skills Academy
Walsall	69	16	32	4	39	2
West Midlands	63	12	29	4	37	2
England	61	11	27	4	36	2

Source: National Employers Skills Survey, 2009

Walsall had higher awareness (69 percent) and involvement (16 percent) in Train to Gain initiative than West Midlands or England. Moreover, awareness of and involvement in the National Skills Academy is generally lower than that of the Skills Pledge in the West Midlands. Walsall has the higher averages for awareness of the National Skills Academies than the West Midlands and England. The percentage of employers that have made the Skills Pledge in Walsall is at 4 %, and therefore same as regional and national average (4 percent).

Young People's Education

The Participation rate in Walsall has improved: 84.6 % of Year 11 school leavers in 2010 continued in full-time education. Young people over sixteen can choose to attend one of Walsall's 21 schools, including Academies and Special Schools, with sixth form provision, the general FE College (Walsall College) or providers outside the borough. Travel-to learn patterns highlight a relationship with the Black Country and Birmingham and Solihull areas, with learners travelling in and out of areas to access learning.

Data indicates that Walsall's outcomes at KS4 rose in 2010. 49.5% of pupils gained five or more GCSEs at grades A*-C including English and Maths, compared with 44% in 2009. 2010 data indicate that at Level 3, the average points per learner enrolled at a school, college or other providers in Walsall rose to 650.52 (from 638.6 in 2009), and the average points per entry to 202 (from 198.2 in 2009). Comparable 2010 national figures for maintained institutions are: 714.4 and 210.

The coalition government is developing radical new education policies. *The Importance of Teaching: The Schools White Paper 2010* outlines the steps necessary to enact whole-system reform in England. It encompasses both profound structural change and rigorous attention to standards. It includes a plan for attracting and training even better teachers. It outlines a direction of travel on the curriculum and qualifications.

A reformed school system which encourages a greater degree of autonomy and innovation is proposed. The present National Curriculum is perceived as one that includes too much that is not essential knowledge, and too much prescription about how to teach. A new approach to the National Curriculum is proposed. This specifies a tighter, more rigorous, model of the knowledge which every child should expect to master in core subjects at every key stage

A return to traditional knowledge - centred approaches to teaching and learning, and a focus in KS4 on a core of five GCSE subjects within the new English Baccalaureate will challenge curriculum content and balance. It is clear, however, that in references to '*a truly rounded education*' schools are still free to create a mix of GCSEs and other qualifications that best meet the needs of learners:

'The English Baccalaureate will be only one measure of performance, and should not be the limit of schools' ambitions for their pupils. Schools will retain the freedom to innovate and offer the GCSEs, iGCSEs and other qualifications which best meet the needs of their pupils. Pupils will of course be able to achieve vocational qualifications alongside the English Baccalaureate'. The Importance of Teaching White Paper 4.24

A review of Vocational Education is underway led by Professor Alison Wolf of King's College London. The White Paper criticises some existing qualifications in vocational education as '*pseudo-academic inherent value ignored, rather than developing the different but equally rich cognitive skills associated with practical and technical education*'. *The Importance of Teaching White Paper 4.51*

The objective of Professor Wolf's review of vocational qualifications is to provide considered advice on how to ensure all young people are in valuable education or training, that supports progression to employment or further and higher education.

Apprenticeships for 16–19 year-olds, which offer paid jobs with training to industry standards in nearly 200 different occupations, will continue to be supported with reshaping to place more emphasis on Apprenticeships at advanced and higher levels, and on progression through the programme and beyond, to higher level skills or higher education. *The Importance of Teaching White Paper 4.53*

The commitment to raising the participation age, undertaken by the previous government, is retained though enforcement legislation is deferred: '*increasing the minimum age at which young people can leave education or training to 17 in 2013 and 18 in 2015. This is in the national economic interest, as well as in the economic interests of young people*'. *We will make sure that it is possible for young people to train while working, through an Apprenticeship or in other ways, as well as undertaking education at school or college. The Importance of Teaching White Paper 4.55*

The age to which all young people will be expected to participate in education or training will rise to 17 by 2013 and then 18 by 2015.

The publication of this latest White Paper does not substantially alter current strategy in Walsall on education of young people:

'Schools, colleges and work-based learning providers are responsible for educating young people. Within the 14-19 Partnership, our schools, training providers and college supported by employers and H.E., have agreed to work together to provide system leadership beyond the boundaries of individual institutions. This is a reflection of the commitment of all partners in Walsall to move towards a collaborative, interdependent and self-improving system, which meets the needs of young people, aged 14-19 in our local community. Walsall's under 18 populations was estimated to be 60,729 in 2009 and is projected to rise to 61,500 by 2012.

To equip young people in Walsall with the education and skills for future employment, our aim is to continually increase levels of participation, retention and attainment and to narrow gaps in attainment across the 14-19 phase through the provision of a wider range of high quality education and skills training pathways with clear access routes valued by learners, parents or carers, employers and the community. Current attainment, at 16 yrs and 19 yrs and the requirement for young people

in 2013 to have continued engagement with learning or employment with training indicate the need for continued broadening of the curriculum offer at levels 1,2 and 3; engagement and aspiration raising activities; targeted support and good quality , impartial advice and guidance provision.’

Nor does it alter Walsall Councils commitment to:

- Full participation and engagement of all young people post 14
- Excellent transition and progression for all young people
- Excellent achievement for all young people
- Collaborative delivery and partnership working to deliver an innovative and challenging curriculum
- Deliver the highest quality of provision for young people

(Walsall 14-19 Plan October 2010)

Foundation Learning

Walsall has a range of foundation learning provision post 16 to meet the needs of vulnerable young people, including NEETs. Over the last three years, the number entering Entry to Employment has risen significantly despite a fall in the number of providers. However, despite increased participation, less than half (46%) of programme leavers move on to further training or employment. Only 7.7% of those taking part in the programme move on to an apprenticeship.

- Foundation Learning is an individualised programme of study consisting of subject and vocational learning, functional skills and personal and social development learning.
- From September 2010 Foundation Learning encompasses all level 1 learning opportunities including those formerly characterised Entry to Employment (E2E) programme.
 - Entry to Employment (E2E) provision in Walsall has been assessed by OfSTED as “GOOD”, with 3 Walsall-based E2E providers (with whom Walsall LA has had close and productive working relationships) having achieved a grade 2.
- There have been 14-19 partnership activities within Walsall and more recently across the Black Country too, to prepare for effective delivery.
- Providers making available a significant, 16-18 Foundation Learning, offer across Walsall are shown in the table below.

Post-16 Destination

Table 53 – Black Country School Leaver Destinations

Black Country School Leaver Destinations Year 11 Activity Survey (2008)

	Walsall	Black Country
Full-time education %	79.8	79.7
Training (non employed) %	7.2	6.3
Employment with training %	2.3	2.4
Employment no training %	2.1	2.6
Voluntary work %	0.1	0.1
Part time education %	0.1	0.1
Part time employment %	0.5	0.5
NEET (available to labour market) %	5.1	5.1
NEET (not available to labour market) %	0.7	0.7
Other	0.2	0.2
Moved out of contact %	0.8	1
No response %	1.2	1.2
Refused to participate %	0	0
Participation in Learning	89.2	88.4

Source: Prospects Connexions Services Ltd (2009)

Apprenticeships

This section takes a view of the government funded Apprenticeships - employer involvement activities in the Black Country.

Table 54 – Awareness of Different Types of Apprenticeships

Awareness of Different types of Apprenticeships by Establishment (Source: NESS 2010)

Awareness of:	West Midlands	England
Government Funded Apprenticeships	91	91
Advanced Apprenticeships	31	28
Adult Apprenticeship	32	31
Higher Apprenticeships	19	16

In West Midlands 91 percent of employers were aware of Apprenticeships regionally and nationally. Moreover, a third of employers regionally (32 percent) and nationally (31 percent) were aware of Adult Apprenticeships, with a slightly lower proportion aware of Advanced Apprenticeships (31 percent regionally and 28 percent nationally). However, employers were less familiar with Higher Apprenticeships, with less than a fifth of employers having heard of them (19 percent regionally, 16 percent nationally). However, the awareness level in West Midlands is higher than the national levels.

Apprenticeship activity in Black Country

As shown in the chart below, the highest proportion of any staff undertaking Apprenticeships is found in Walsall (7 percent), which also has one of the highest proportions of businesses offering them at 10 percent. In the Black Country, Wolverhampton also has the highest overall proportion of businesses offering Apprenticeships (10 percent) but do not have the highest proportions of staff undertaking them. The lowest proportions of businesses with any staff undertaking an Apprenticeship are found in Solihull (all 3 percent), which also have relatively low proportions of those businesses offering apprenticeship (Solihull – 8 percent).

Chart 18 – Employers Involvement in Apprenticeships

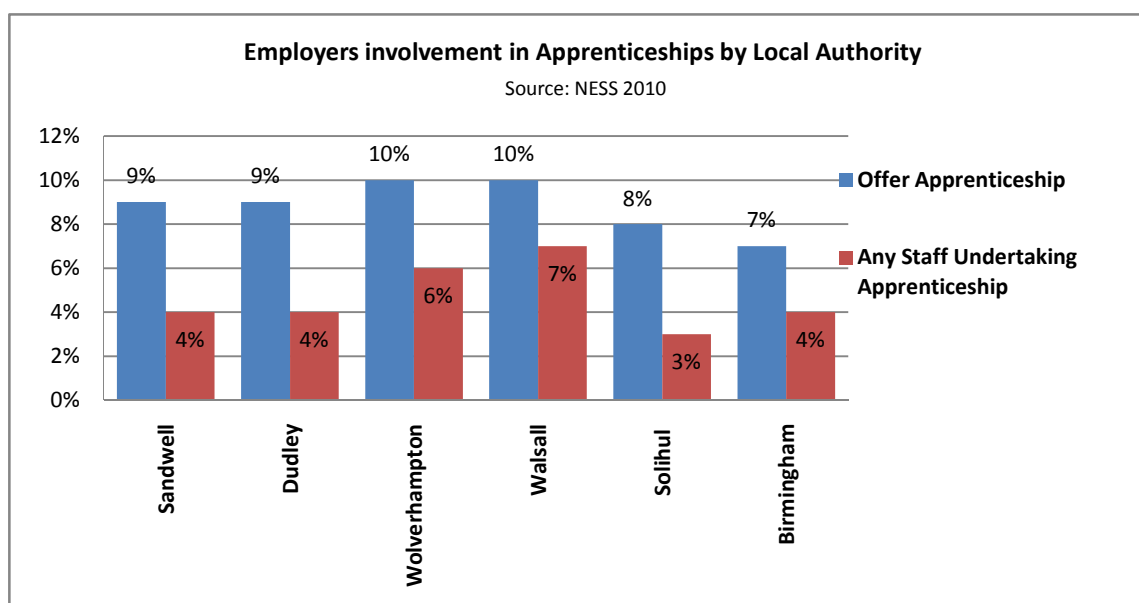
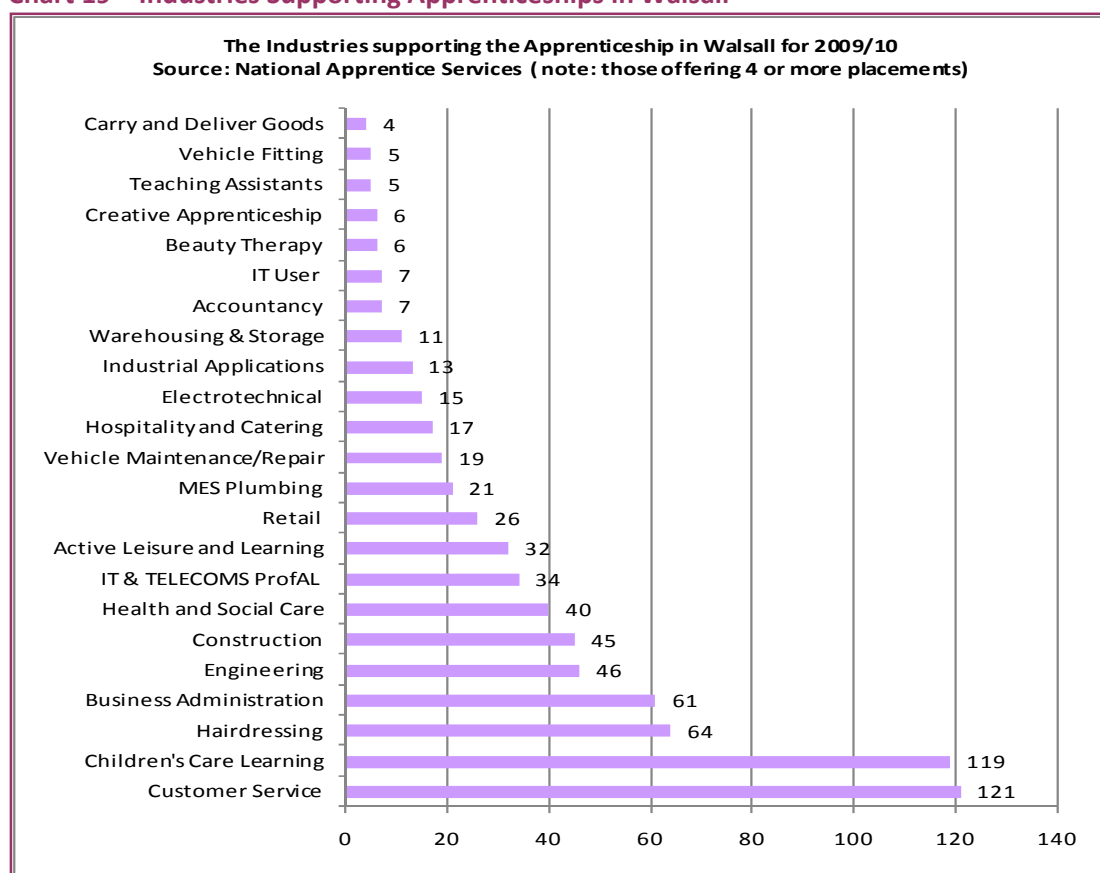


Chart 19 – Industries Supporting Apprenticeships in Walsall



For Walsall a significant level of the support (54%) for Apprenticeship is from Customer Service, Children's Care Learning, Hairdressing, Business Administration and Engineering Industries. The retail industry support for Apprenticeship is comparatively low at less than 4%. It notable that in Walsall manufacturing sector continues to be a significant employer yet the highest number of opportunities is in other sectors. The higher number of apprenticeships in the customer services and business administration are indicative of current growth level in the financial and service sectors in Walsall since 2007 and decline in traditional manufacturing sectors.

Table 55 – Apprenticeship Starts and Participation of Walsall Residents

Apprenticeship Starts and Participation reports for Walsall residents over the last 3 years Source: National Apprentice services

Last 3 years Source National Apprenticeship services					
Age Group	Programme Type	Data	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
16-18	Advanced apprenticeship	Starts	146	119	156
		Participation	360	364	386
	Apprenticeship	Starts	536	483	600
		Participation	983	953	1,027
	Higher Level Apprenticeship	Starts			2
		Participation	0	0	2
	NVQ Level 3	Starts	0		
		Participation	1	0	0
16-18 Sum of starts			682	602	758
16-18 Sum of Participation			1,344	1,317	1,415

Age Group	Programme Type	Data	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
19-25	Advanced apprenticeship	Starts	183	146	175
		Participation	405	360	354
	Apprenticeship	Starts	258	280	383
		Participation	434	490	586
	Higher Level Apprenticeship	Starts			7
		Participation	0	0	7
	NVQ Level 4	Starts	3		
		Participation	9	0	0
19-25 Sum of starts			444	426	565
19-25 Sum of Participation			848	850	947
Over 25	Advanced apprenticeship	Starts	88	106	185
		Participation	88	186	293
	Apprenticeship	Starts	98	171	144
		Participation	98	245	275
Over 25 Sum of starts			186	277	329
Over 25 Sum of Participation			186	431	568
Total Starts			1,312	1,305	1,652
Total Participation			2,378	2,598	2,930

The chart above provides details on apprenticeship starts and participation level for Walsall over the last 3 years. Starts are classed as those learners that started in that particular year, participation figures includes starts in year and those still in learning from the previous year i.e. they started last year but are still on programme. Overall for all age groups the participation level dropped during 2008/09 but for 2009/10 the levels were highest for the last three years.

NEETS 16-18 year-olds NEET (2008)

Although educational achievements in Walsall are improving and an increasing number of school leavers continue in full-time education, there remains a significant number of 16-18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training, referred to as NEETs. Many of these young people come from the most deprived areas of Walsall, have very limited, if any, qualifications and have grown up in families with a history of worklessness.

The overall number of NEETs during 2008 in Walsall stood at 830; this represented 8.30% of the 16-18 cohorts. Although many of these are either looking for work or between jobs, service providers find that they are often helping young people with serious barriers to participation including - low educational attainment, learning difficulties and disabilities, mental illness, drug and alcohol misuse, a police record and disrupted home circumstances – including young people who have been in care or recently left care. Many young people who are NEET come from families where worklessness and unemployment is an accepted norm.

Table 56 – NEETs Proportion of 16-18 year olds

NEETS Proportion of 16-18 year-olds NEET (2008)

	16-18 year olds Population	16-18 year olds NEETs	% NEET	% Unknown
Dudley	13,251	710	5.30%	5.30%
Sandwell	7,319	850	11.60%	5.50%
Walsall	9,946	830	8.30%	4.80%
Wolverhampton	8,664	710	8.20%	6.00%
West Midlands	180,356	12,670	7.00%	4.30%

Source: DCSF 2008

In comparison with the West Midlands regional average the number of NEETs in Walsall is high but when compared with its Black Country neighbours it has a similar number of NEETs to Wolverhampton and fewer than Sandwell, with only Dudley having a lower number.

Over the last 5 years the number of NEETs in Walsall has significantly reduced, falling from 10.3% in 2005/6 to 8.1% in 2009/10. This reduction brings the LA into line with the average performance of our Statistical Neighbours. Since 2005-6 Walsall has succeeded in reducing the NEET % by 19.4%, a greater reduction than the average of our statistical neighbours (16.3%). This improvement was achieved at the same time as adult unemployment rose – e.g. from 3.75% in May 2008 to 7.35% in August 2009 (an increase of 96%).

Walsall can maintain its effective approach to NEET reduction through the continued implementation of the Walsall Engagement Strategy which includes four key operational principles:

- Identification and Tracking - the early identification and tracking of those learners who are at risk of becoming NEET;
- Intervention - the provision of activities to develop the personal and social skills, as well as raising the aspirations and self confidence, of learners identified as being at risk of becoming NEET;
- Information, Advice and Guidance - the provision of enhanced information, advice and guidance to ensure learners know how to access education, training or employment;
- Provision - the development of a full range of courses at both Key Stage 4 and post 16, delivered in partnership with training providers, the College, local employers and the voluntary and community sectors, to meet the needs of learners at risk and to provide a wide variety of styles of learning to meet individual needs.

The Walsall Improving Participation and Engagement Steering (WIPES) Group have been set up to support the implementation of the strategy and to monitor the delivery of activities currently funded through WNF targeted action plan. WIPES aims to continue the reduction in the number of NEETs by:

- Engaging as diverse a range of partners as possible in order to be able to map skills coverage and vocational context against the needs of young people who are NEET;
- Building on already existing organisations if they are currently engaged in activities that support those in the NEET group;
- Spending time exploring the views of other partners so Walsall Council can create a shared understanding for planning and implementation;

- Being prepared to learn from the good practice of other partners and to share it with others;
- Investing time (and resources) in developing accurate and up-to-date data collection processes in order for Walsall Council to be able to focus more closely on the specific needs of young people who are NEET.

Walsall can continue its effective partnership approach to NEET reduction by further developing activities currently funded through the WNF targeted action plan and continuing its present activity to support NEETS although it must be recognised that appropriate funding is required.

Vocational Training

There is generally thought to be a good level of vocational training in Walsall, especially for the young, and the quantity of the vocational courses on offer is increasing. Moreover, schools are beginning to offer vocational alternatives to purely academic courses at secondary school level. Vocational courses post-16 is not limited to Walsall Borough only and many students wishing to pursue vocational courses are willing to travel considerable distances to learn. Some level of vocational training is offered at many local community centres, and although much of this training focuses on basic skills targeted at low achievers, some centres offer a much wider range of training opportunities.

Walsall College Training Provisions

Table 57 – Walsall College Training Outcomes

Education Level	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Level 1	1618	1629	2214	1303
Level 2	7012	8314	7244	3202
Level 3	3044	3486	3673	3254
Level 4	204	145	96	68
Level 5	150	169	267	254
Level 6		13	23	12
Entry Level	949	1009	867	170
E1			23	41
E2			86	310
E3			55	200
Higher Level	130	187	119	131
Not Applicable	1360	3516	1470	490

Source: Walsall College

The examination of Walsall college data indicates that participation in Level 1, 2 and 3 qualifications has been consistent over the last 4 years. However, it is notable that Level 1 qualifications had increased significantly during 2009/10 by 36%. For level 3 there has been steady growth in participants since 2007/08 and during same period the level 4 has seen a steady decline in the number of participants.

Table 58 – Number of Achievements by Vocation Area

Vocational Area	Total for 2007/08	Total for 2008/09	Total for 2009/10	Total for 2010/11 (to Nov 10)
Arts, Media and Publishing	781	644	756	860
Business, Administration and Law	1107	2126	2119	973
Construction, Planning and the Built Environment	797	888	846	650
Education and Training	332	440	420	317
Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies	2253	2338	2171	1222
Health, Public Services and Care	3201	2561	2020	1267
History, Philosophy and Theology		15	46	58
Information and Communication Technology	770	890	962	547
Languages, Literature and Culture	175	257	810	327
Leisure, Travel and Tourism	243	363	741	332
Preparation for Life and Work	2200	2360	2342	1242
Retail and Commercial Enterprise	2483	2762	2177	1340
Science and Mathematics	151	170	345	290
Social Sciences		17	23	28
Unknown	4	2660	199	35

Source: Walsall College

While the most popular vocational area of interest in 2007/08 academic year was health, public services and care the most popular vocational area of interest for 2010/11 is Retail and Commercial Enterprise. Moreover, the number of participants in Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies has been steadily declining – 2253 participants in 2007/08 to 1222 in 2010/11. For the year 2010/11, there is a decline in the number of participants in Construction, Planning and built environment.

Table 59 – Walsall College Age and Gender Profile

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Learners Age Group				
16-18	3856	5989	4957	4281
19+	10283	11920	10588	4837
Under16	338	559	592	317
Learners Gender				
Female	7034	8994	7490	4449
Male	7443	9474	8647	4986

Source: Walsall College

The 16-18 year olds participation level increased in 2008/09. It is notable that for academic year 2010/11, the 19+ participants are significantly lower in comparison to last three years. Moreover, for the current academic year 2010/11 the number of female participants is lower than male participants, which is in contrast to previous academic years.

As ethnic groups, White British group is significantly high in terms of participation followed by British Asian groups. Moreover, the non-British white group had 956 participants during 2009/10 academic year. This may provide indication of Eastern European and Russian students' participation.

Table 60 – Walsall College Ethnicity Profile

Ethnic Origin				
	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	143	275	258	157
Asian or Asian British - Indian	664	790	731	375
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	449	785	735	360
Asian or Asian British - any other	132	182	234	89
Black or Black British - African	351	391	370	238
Black or Black British - Caribbean	501	619	565	379
Black or Black British - any other Black background	66	82	82	47
Chinese	74	92	164	81
Mixed - White and Asian	81	98	85	71
Mixed - White and Black African	39	40	31	17
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	266	368	344	252
Mixed - any other	40	78	68	39
White - British	10712	13676	11259	6750
White - Irish	36	82	70	47
White - any other White background	531	643	956	380
Any other	135	106	107	64
Not known	257	161	78	89
Total	14477	18468	16137	9435
Source: Walsall College				

Table 61 - Walsall Adults and Community College Training Provisions

Vocational Qualifications Level	19+ Learner Responsive	16-18 Learner Responsive	19+ Adult Safeguarded Learning	16-18 Adult Safeguarded Learning	Employer Responsive T2G	Grand Total
X	498	2	5218	27		5745
Level 1	2591	52	42	3		2688
Level 2	903	123			148	1174
Level 3	303	6			273	582
Higher Education	49				10	59
Total	4344	183	5260	30	431	10248
Source: WACC						

For the current year there were over 26% learners with Level 1 training participants. For the pre-qualification participants represent over 50% students. Moreover, the number for the current year the 19+Adult Safeguarded Learners is 5260.

Table 62 - Student Support Activities

Student Support Activity	16-18 Adult Safeguarded Learning	16-18 Learner Responsive	19+ Adult Safeguarded Learning	19+ Learner Responsive	Employer Responsive T2G	Total
Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care	-		33	104		137
Arts, Media and Publishing			1467	186		1653
Business, Administration & Law		7		79	116	202
Construction, planning and the Built Environment		15	86	27		128
Education & Training		7	34	317	184	542
Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies	2		347			349
Health Public Services and Care	1	5	193	90	130	419
History, Philosophy and Technology			26			26
Information & Communication Technology		3	1165	1280		2448
Languages, Literature & Culture	1	6	354	15		376
Leisure, Travel and Tourism		97	433	33		563
Preparation for Work & Life	26	34	1000	2105		3165
Retail & Commercial Enterprise			84	61	1	146
Science & Mathematics		9	38	47		94
Total	30	183	5260	4344	431	10248

Source: WACC

The three main categories in terms of student support activities the student numbers are Arts, Media and Publishing (1653); Information and Communication (2448); and Preparation for work and Life (3165). It is notable that given that the main employing sector in Walsall is still manufacturing, there is comparatively small number of students participating in the Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies courses (349). It is also notable that for the current academic year 2010/11, there is very little training activity around the subject of Construction, Planning and the built environment.

Table 63 - Student

	16-18 Adult Safeguarded Learning	16-18 Learner Responsive	19+ Adult Safeguarded Learning	19+ Learner Responsive	Employer Responsive T2G	Grand Total
Learners Age Group						
16-18	30	183				213
19+			5260	4344	431	10035
Learners Gender						
Female	27	74	3964	3155	378	7598
Male	3	109	1296	1189	53	2650

Source: WACC

For the current academic year 2010/11 the number of female participants is significantly than male participants. In terms of learner's age groups, the 19+ group is the largest group. For the 16-18 age groups the number of students registered are 213 for the academic year 2010/11.

Table 64 - Disability Profile

Disability	16-18 Adult Safeguarded Learning	16-18 Learner Responsive	19+ Adult Safeguarded Learning	19+ Learner Responsive	Employer Responsive T2G	Total
1 - Visual impairment			6	27	1	34
2 - Hearing impairment			17	25	2	44
3 - Disability affecting mobility			23	74	2	99
4 - Other physical disability			8	42		50
5 - Other medical condition			24	106	1	131
6 - Emotional/behavioural difficulties				39		39
7 - Mental health difficulties			5	47		52
9 - Profound/complex disabilities				2		2
90 - Multiple disabilities			9	174	1	184
97 - Other		6	188	237	5	436
98 - No disability	28	169	4804	3534	401	8936
99 - Not known	2	8	176	37	18	241
Total	30	183	5260	4344	431	10248

Source: WACC

It is notable that, whilst 8936 students have no disability, there are 184 students with multiple disabilities and 131 students with some medical conditions as well as 99 students with disability effecting mobility. Moreover, for the current academic year (2010/11), there are 52 students with mental health difficulties and 39 students with emotional/behavioural difficulties. In main the Walsall Adult and Community College makes available resources and therefore specific provisions for the students with different types of disabilities.

Table 65 - Learners with Difficulty

Learner Difficulty	16-18 Adult Safeguarded Learning	16-18 Learner Responsive	19+ Adult Safeguarded Learning	19+ Learner Responsive	Employer Responsive T2G	Total
1 - Moderate learning difficulty			4	281		285
10 - Dyslexia		2	1	34	1	38
19 - Specific learning difficulty				4		4
2 - Severe learning difficulty				82		82
20 - Autism spectrum disorder				6		6
90 - Multiple learning difficulties				37		37
97 - Other		6	204	193	8	411
98 - No learning difficulty	28	167	4875	3659	405	9134
99 - Not known	2	8	176	48	17	251
Total	30	183	5260	4344	431	10248

Source: WACC

For the learners with difficulties, the Walsall and Adult Community College has good provisions. That is, for the current year, 2010/11, there are 9134 students with no learning difficulties. However,

there are 285 students with moderate learning difficulty, 38 are Dyslexic, 82 with severe learning difficulties and 37 are with multiple learning difficulties. The majority of these students with learning difficulties are in the 19+ learner responsive groups.

Table 66 - Ethnicity Profile

Ethnicity	16-18 Adult Safeguarded Learning	16-18 Learner Responsive	19+ Adult Safeguarded Learning	19+ Learner Responsive	Employer Responsive T2G	Total
11 - Bangladeshi		5	117	249	7	378
12 - Indian	1	10	327	510	30	878
13 - Pakistani	3	11	324	597	18	953
14 - Other Asian		2	19	23		44
15 - African	1	2	45	51	1	100
16 - Caribbean		4	60	84	18	166
17 - Other black		1		6		7
18 - Chinese			1	15		16
19 - Mixed White/Asian		1	7	2		10
20 - Mixed White/African			10	7	1	18
21 - Mixed White/Caribbean	1	8	16	14	1	40
22 - Mixed Other			4	6		10
23 - White British	22	132	4192	2520	350	7216
24 - White Irish			25	10	1	36
25 - White Other	1		86	127	4	218
98 - Other	1	7	27	123		158
Total	30	183	5260	4344	431	10248

Source: WACC

For the ethnicity of the students registering with the Walsall Adult and Community College, the main group is White British group – 7216 students. The next three groups are followed by the South Asian community groups – Pakistani (953), Indian (878) and Bangladeshi (378).

Table 67 - Prior Attainment Levels

Prior Attainment Level	Walsall College				WACC
	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2010-2011
01 - Level 1	2490	3190	3281	1649	1030
02 - Full level 2	3029	3625	3302	1638	1113
03 - Full level 3	966	1246	1115	341	547
04 - Level 4	514	564	489	145	452
05 - Level 5 and above	80	120	169	45	318
07 - Other qualifications below level 1	202	320	222	83	40
09 - Entry Level	116	275	324	149	1170
97 - Other qualification, level not known	263	155	222	60	421
98 - Not known	1724	1232	2294	1758	888
99 - No qualifications	5113	7764	4558	3619	4269

Source: Walsall College and WACC

For Walsall College the number of students registering with no qualifications has been reducing since 2007. As for Walsall Adult and Community College (WACC) there are 4269 students have

registered with no qualifications for the current academic year. Moreover, for WACC the number of entry level students is 1170, which is significantly higher than the Walsall College numbers.

Skills Summary

- Walsall faces unemployment issues across all skills levels and that jobs at all levels are required to increase employment – even amongst those with higher level qualifications, unemployment is higher in Walsall (5%) than in the region and nationally (4%).
- Walsall has a lower proportion of residents with qualifications at all levels. In the main, Walsall has very few highly skilled residents who have qualifications at Level 4 or above.
- While Walsall continues to improve the averages for qualifications amongst the working age population lags both West Midlands and England.
- To meet the 2011 targets - 34% of working age population will need to be equipped with NVQ Level 4 or above by 2011; 56% of working age population will need to be equipped with NVQ Level 3 or above by 2011; 79% of working age population will need to be equipped with NVQ Level 2 or above by 2011;
- Intelligence from Sector Skills Councils and Business Clusters indicates that businesses need support to help them exploit new technology, adapt to new legislation (notably relating to low carbon and sustainability issues), meet the demands of an ageing population and satisfy ever more demanding consumers.
- Overall, the trends for skills shortages nationally and regionally in West Midlands point to an increased demand for higher skills as the economy shifts away from sectors which rely more on process/plant and elementary occupations and into higher value added sectors.
- Although knowledge based industries make a smaller contribution to the Walsall economy than they do regionally or nationally, they are nonetheless expected to be the main focus of growth in the future, and this will translate into increasing demand for workers with NVQ level 4 and above qualifications.
- The number of businesses with the skills gap in Walsall is higher than the Black Country, West Midlands and England averages.
- Despite sound educational achievements, school leavers tend to be lacking basic skills, for example in numeracy, spelling and letter writing. Many lack a basic work ethic, few have sound practical skills and there is a general lack of “work-readiness”
- There is collaboration between local colleges and employers encouraging links and confidence between highly skilled people and develop local opportunities, whilst also attracting investment from outside the sub-region.
- In Walsall a significant level of the support (54 percent) for Apprenticeship is in sectors such as Customer Service, Children’s Care Learning, Hairdressing, Business Administration and Engineering Industries.
- While the overall number of NEETs during 2008 in Walsall stood at 830, this nonetheless represented 8.30% of the 16-18 cohorts.

SWOT Analysis

Using the information contained in the earlier sections, it has been possible to determine the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats for the Worklessness Assessment. This has then been used to develop the Action Plan which is included in the following section.

Strengths

1. Walsall traditionally strong manufacturing sector provides a platform for high skilled employees.
2. Collaboration between local colleges and employers encourages links and confidence.
3. Collaboration between local colleges and employers develops local opportunities and attracts investment from outside the sub-region.
4. Strategically located businesses in Walsall forming part of the Black Country network.
5. Good understanding of the issues around worklessness in Walsall, and activities in place to address these.
6. Collaboration between partners and service providers is well established
7. Transportation infrastructure enabling workers to access regional employment opportunities
8. Experience of “One Stop Shops” supporting jobseekers in Walsall
9. Existing infrastructure for providing advice for self employment in Walsall

Weaknesses

1. There are 18,000 households with at least one adult claiming benefits in Walsall and there 15,000 dependent children residing in these homes.
2. There are significant concentrations of job seekers in and around the town centre and northern wards.
3. Further, as with JSA and IB there is an east west divide in the Borough, with greater concentrations of carers claiming benefits in the centre and to the west of Walsall.
4. The most obvious supply-side barrier is a lack of skills in relation to those demanded by employers as qualification levels are significantly lower among the workless population.
5. The number of businesses with the skills gap in Walsall is higher than in the Black Country, West Midlands and England.
6. The expectations of 3,200 males and 2,300 females aged 24 and under who are unemployed in Walsall are likely to be damaged by a failure to gain the work experience needed.
7. In Walsall inactivity is higher than the regional and national average across the majority of age groups – but male and female inactivity in Walsall is particularly high in 20-34 year olds.
8. Growing number of people living in households with multi-generational benefit claimants.
9. Inactivity is higher within the ethnic minority population with almost four in every ten, with particularly high inactivity levels within the female Pakistani and Bangladeshi working age population (82.8%).
10. In February 2010, around 4,160 lone parents were claiming benefits and the claimant rate (2.6% of the working age population) was higher than the regional (2.0%) and national average (1.8%). This has been a long term trend.
11. Walsall has a lower proportion of residents with qualifications at all levels. In the main, Walsall has very few highly skilled residents who have qualifications at Level 4 or above

Opportunities

1. Growth sectors include the public sector (i.e. health and social care), business & professional services, retail, distribution, hotels and restaurants
2. Intelligence from Sector Skills Councils and Business Clusters indicates that manufacturing businesses need support to help them exploit new technology, adapt to new legislation (notably relating to low carbon and sustainability issues), meet the demands of an ageing population and satisfy ever more demanding consumers.
3. Overall, the trends for skills shortages nationally and regionally in West Midlands point to an increased demand for higher skills as the economy shifts away from sectors which rely more on process/plant and elementary occupations and into higher value added sectors.
4. Although knowledge based industries make a smaller contribution to the Walsall economy than they do regionally or nationally, they are nonetheless expected to be the main focus of growth in the future, and this will translate into increasing demand for workers with NVQ level 4 and above qualifications
5. In Walsall a significant level of the support (54 percent) for Apprenticeship is in sectors such as Customer Service, Children's Care Learning, Business Administration and Engineering Industries
6. Collaboration between local partners and service providers is well established
7. Growth sectors include the public sector (i.e. health and social care), business & professional services, retail, distribution, hotels and restaurants
8. There are significant concentrations of job seekers in and around the town centre, which is closely connected to the housing market and levels of social, rented and low value properties.

Threats

1. Long term unemployment is a growing issue in the Borough, particularly in relation to those unemployed for between 1 and 2 years.
2. In Walsall over a fifth of job seekers (21%) have been in receipt of support for over a year in comparison to 17% nationally, suggesting a lack of suitable jobs for claimants to re-enter employment.
3. Lone parents make up the third largest group of benefit claimants in the Borough.
4. School leavers tend to be lacking basic skills, for example in numeracy, spelling and letter writing. Many lack a basic work ethic, few have sound practical skills and there is a general lack of "work-readiness"
5. Growing gap between the skills that Walsall residents have compared to what future employers will require.
6. Nearly 42,800 people (27.3% of the working age population) are economically inactive in Walsall, higher than the regional (24.4%) and national rates (23.4%)
7. Challenge in assisting older people back into employment with female IB claimant numbers highest amongst 45-54 and 55-59 year olds. There are also a significant number of relatively young men also in receipt of the benefit.
8. The female claimant count is above average for the majority of age groups and in particular those ages 25-34 and 55-59. Although in terms of scale the largest female groups are those aged 35-44 and 45-54.
9. The main barriers include: transport, childcare, work experience, benefit dependency, low income
10. Effect of the Informal Economy: informal opportunities more attractive, easy to find informal work, tax issues

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