

8.7 Carers

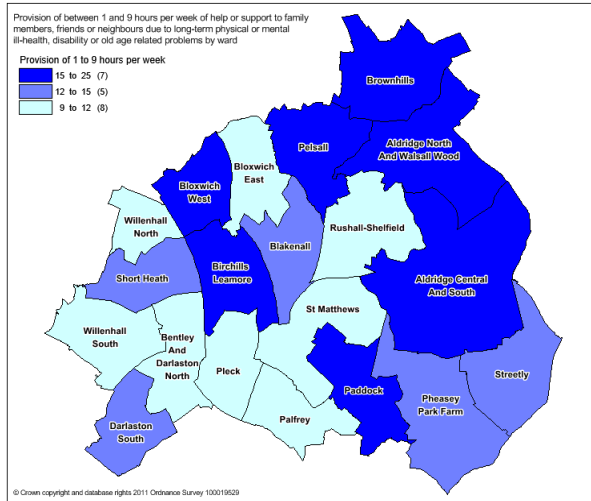
Walsall has a higher than national percentage of people living with a long term health problem or disability where residents are limited a lot or a little in their daily activities (20.7% compared to 17.6%). Many of these will require support from families and friends which is often unpaid, and many will have health or social needs of their own. In 2001, 10.6% of the population in Walsall were caring for someone with a long term illness (11% nationally). This figure has increased in Walsall to 11.6% in 2011, with the national rate staying the same.

2011 Census respondents claim to be limited a lot in their day to day activities due to their health problem or disability in the highly deprived areas of Blakenall, Birchills and Bloxwich as well as the not so deprived area of Brownhills and pockets of Aldridge.

[Walsall Carers' Strategy 2012-14 - Making Carers Count](#) identified over 27,000 residents are carers (1 in 10), with over half aged 50+. A range of carers across the borough were contacted to gain an insight as to what caring is like. In addition, to identify what carers need and to ensure they have a voice and will be listened to. Carers identified what is important to them:

- C** Come and find us, understand our role. Concentrate on the things that matter to us.
- A** Ask us about our experiences. Appreciate us. Accept our criticism. Assess us quickly.
- R** Really listen to us. Respect the contribution we make to our communities and our council.
- E** Experts don't come any better than us. Expect us to shape your services. Enable us to have a life.
- R** Rest and Relaxation is what we need. Respite. Replacement care that is "gold standard".
- S** Support us to be able to work if we are able. Show us realistic financial support if we are not.

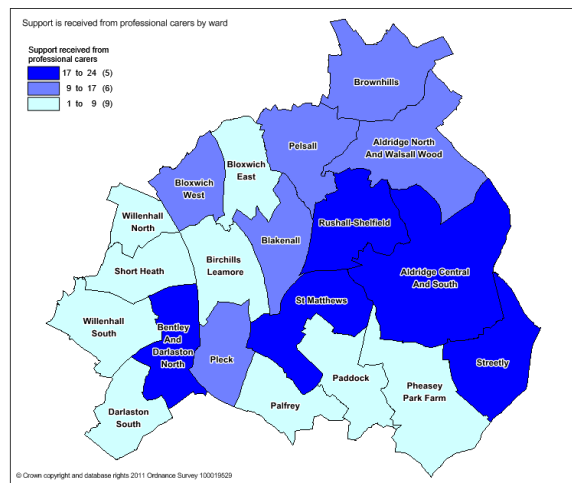
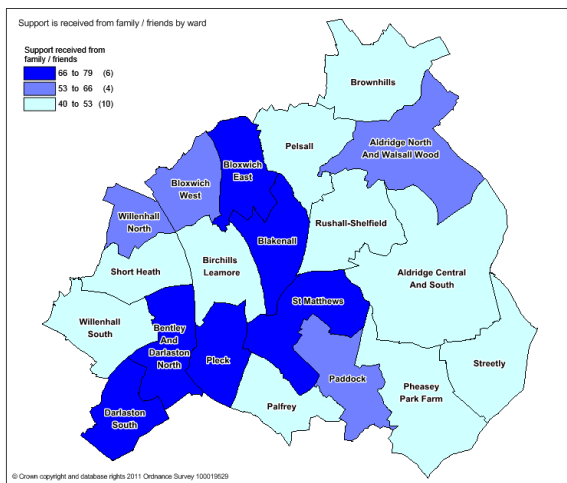
The 2012 Your place, Your Wellbeing: Walsall Household and Lifestyles survey contained specific questions on caring responsibilities and using this local data will provide a clearer local picture of this group of people and provide more of an insight as to how many residents are offering unpaid care to a relative, friend or neighbour.



In Walsall, 31% of respondents offer care ranging from 1 to over 50 hours per week (69% provide none at all). Of these, the majority provide 1 to 9 hours (14%) with respondents living in Aldridge North and Walsall Wood (25%) and Pelsall (21%) greatest compared to 9% of respondents living in Bloxwich East and Rushall-Shelfield.

Of those respondents who provide some care to a family member, friend or neighbour, half receive added support from other family members or friends compared to 39% who do not receive any other support.

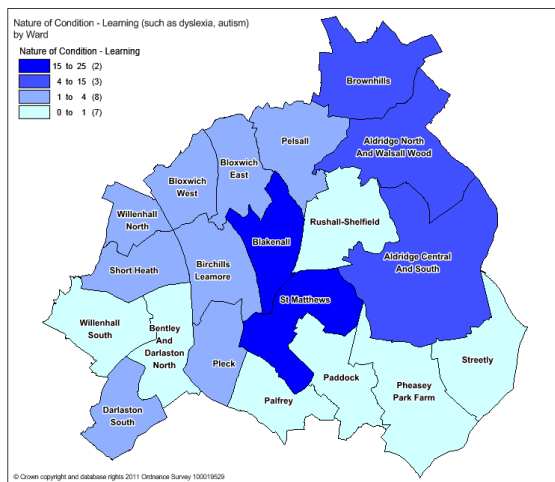
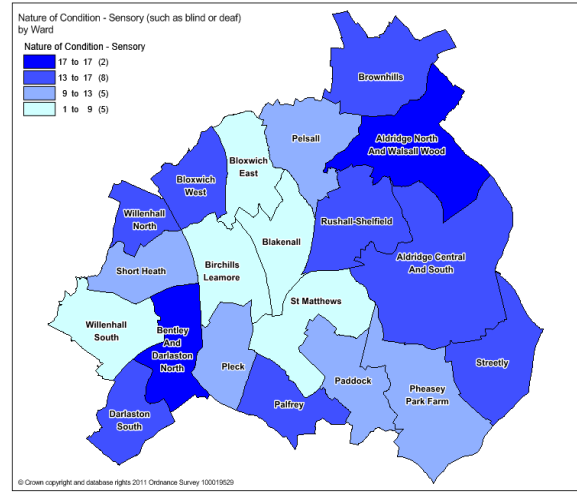
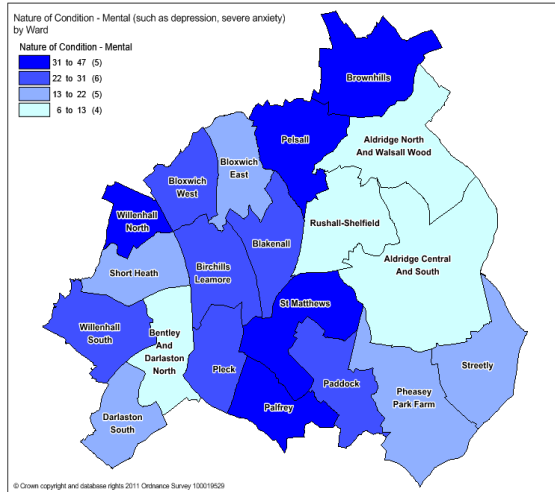
Geographically, Bentley and Darlaston North (79%) and Darlaston South (73%) are the top 2 wards with the greatest proportion of respondents who receive additional support from family / friends.



Professional carers also offer support – 13% of respondents claim to receive it. Geographically, respondents use of professional carers is greatest in Bentley and Darlaston North (24%), Aldridge Central and South ward and Streetly (21%).

When asked what the conditions the person being cared for has, the majority (40%) are longstanding, 37% are physical and 32% other, with the top 3 wards for each condition being as follows:

Longstanding	Physical	Other
Bloxwich West (59%)	Aldridge North & Walsall Wood (58%)	Aldridge North & Walsall Wood (46%)
Rushall-Shelfield (51%)	Willenhall South (54%)	Pheasey Park Farm (45%)
Willenhall South (47%)	Willenhall North (51%)	Short Heath (44%)



The other 3 conditions included within the survey are:

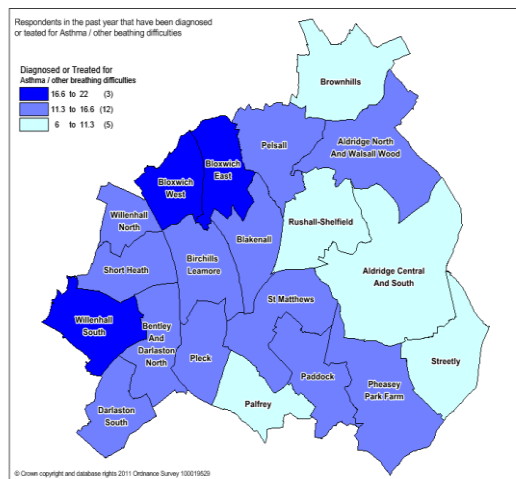
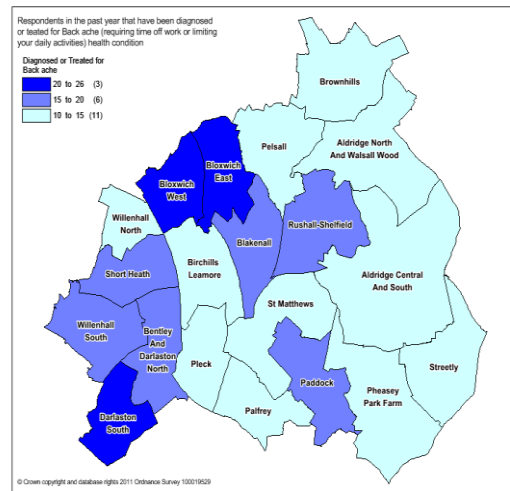
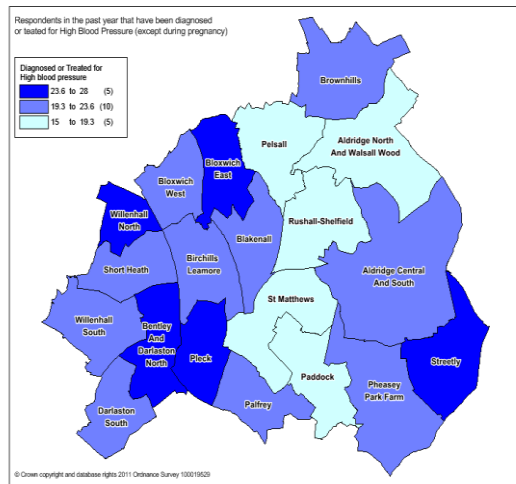
- Mental (22%) - Palfrey (47%) and St Matthew's (44%) are the 2 most prominent wards with respondents claiming to suffer from a mental condition
- Sensory (11%) - respondents who suffer from such a condition are prominent in Aldridge North and Walsall Wood ward and Bentley and Darlaston North (17%) and 15% from Birchills ward
- Learning Disability (3%) - Learning difficulties are the least common condition in Walsall but are prominent in 2 wards – St Matthew's (25%) and Blakenall (15%).

71% of respondents in Walsall agree with the statement – “There are people I know – amongst my family and friends – who would see that I am taken care of if I needed to be”, compared to only 7% who do not. Rushall-Sheffield and Bloxwich West have the greatest number of respondents who agree (82% and 80% respectively). In contrast, 15% of respondents living in St Matthew's and Birchills Leamore disagree with the statement.

The top 3 conditions respondents state they have been diagnosed with in the past year are illustrated in the table below. Interestingly, when this data is compared to QoF 2012/13 data, higher proportions of residents are claiming to have been diagnosed with a condition – this may suggest that there are people who haven't been diagnosed by a registered GP and there are residents who require / need services but aren't currently recognised.

	2012 Lifestyle Survey	2012/13 QoF Data
High Blood Pressure	22%	15.89%
Back Ache	15%	-
Asthma	14%	6.45%

Geographically, these conditions vary, as illustrated in the maps below:



A greater proportion of respondents suffer from high blood pressure in Streetly (28%) and Pleck and Willenhall North wards (27%).

Back ache (requiring time off work or limiting daily activities) is prominent in Bloxwich West and Bloxwich East (26% and 24% respectively).

Asthma or other breathing difficulties is most prominent in Bloxwich West and Willenhall South (22%) and Bloxwich East (20%).

Longer term efforts to support carers will determine the level of services which the statutory organisations will have to provide.

Carers who give up their work or reduce their hours of paid work to support relatives, are often disadvantaged by this, with lower incomes. Low incomes or worklessness in Walsall is strongly correlated with poor health outcomes, as well as with child poverty, crime, lack of aspirations, and lower levels of educational achievement. This contributes to a vicious cycle of intergenerational unemployment and disadvantage that needs to be tackled from a number of angles.

A recent press release in August 2013 - ['Support for Working Carers Needed to Help Businesses and Boost the Economy'](#) states "Better support for working carers would give businesses and the UK economy a much needed boost and would save taxpayers £1.3 billion a year". It warns businesses risk losing experienced and valuable employees if action isn't taken to enable people with caring responsibilities to remain in employment.

Priorities for action:

- *Continue to utilise the 'Your place, Your Wellbeing: Walsall Household and Lifestyle Survey' to estimate the number of carers in Walsall and guide local service development*