

# Walsall Children and Young People's Strategy

## Journey to becoming a Child Friendly Borough by 2040



**Produced by the Children and Young People's Alliance**  
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# Foreword



Dear Children and Young People of Walsall,

We, the Walsall Strategic Alliance, are proud to present to you the Walsall Children and Young Persons Strategy.

This strategy is the result of lots of learning from listening to children, young people, and professionals to understand your current lived experiences and the drivers for change that will influence what Walsall looks like and feels like for children and young people in 2040. Our goal is to make Walsall a child-friendly borough where all children grow up healthy, happy, and achieve their potential. By 2040 the children of the Borough will be equipped to maintain good emotional wellbeing and resilience for later life.

This strategy sets out a direction we want to travel in, but it's more than just getting to the end goal; it's about the journey and what we

learn from what you said along the way. We'll keep checking our compass with to make sure we're on the right track, reflecting on what we've done, and learning from it. We'll make changes when needed so we can reach our goals and truly make a difference to your lives.

We are committed to working together to turn the curve on current projections and ensure that Walsall is a vibrant place where you are proud to live and people in all neighbourhoods have the same life chances.

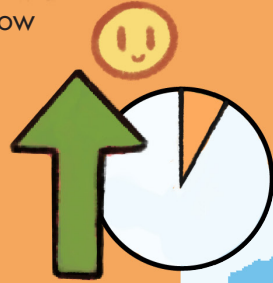
We hope that this strategy will serve as a guide for our collective efforts to make Walsall a better place for all our children and young people.

Sincerely,  
**The Walsall Children and Young People's Alliance**

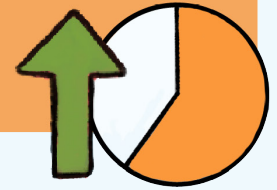
# Why do we need a Children and Young People's Strategy?

If we do not take action, we predict that:

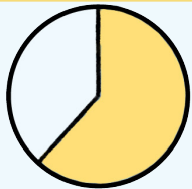
The overall population of Walsall will grow **5.5%** between now and 2040. Those aged under 16 will increase by **8%.**



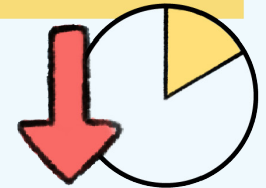
There will be an increase to around 1/17 children and young people with Special Educational Needs (SEN), an increase of **66%** by 2040.



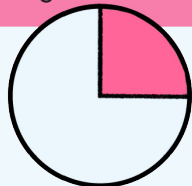
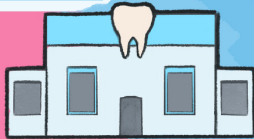
We predict that **63%** (nearly 2/3) of young people aged 16 and under will live in relative low-income families.



There will be **20%** fewer children and young people aged 5-18 doing 60 minutes of activity per day.



**25%** (one in every four) of children will show signs of dental decay.



Walsall will be behind England's average for those achieving **5+** GCSE's.





# What have children and young people told us?

During 2024, we asked over 500 children and young people about what it is like to live in Walsall, what their hopes were for the future, and what could be improved.

**60%**

of children felt that Walsall would not be a positive place to live in 2040

**41%**

of children and young people said that feeling safe and crime is important for feeling that they belong in Walsall



**75%**

of children who said they would leave before 2040 are from deprived areas

# Meet our four children

We'd like you to meet four children, each one of these children has a similar life to some children in Walsall today. Their worlds have been created based on the effects of climate change and social change.

Professionals have used these for worlds to understand how we can stop the negative things from happening and to understand how to promote the positive aspects through our strategy.

## Negative Social Change

**Hi! I'm Prisha,** this is what my life looks like.

Struggles with reading and writing so is dropping out of school.

Has to get a job so she can help with paying the bills and buying food for her family.

Impacted by climate change.

Lots of community tension.

### What we'll do

Improve the quality and accessibility of education, health, and green spaces.

**Hi! I'm Sammy,** this is what my life looks like.

Teachers understand bad things have happened in Sammy's life and offer support mainly online.

Lots of community tension.

There are limited opportunities to interact with peers.

Has been taught life skills such as cooking and budgeting.

### What we'll do.

Develop school curriculum to include environmental and life skills, support existing strategies.

**Hi! I'm Alex,** this is what my life looks like.

Must walk everywhere as has no other means of transport.

Access to green spaces is very limited.

The community works together to grow their own healthy food and support each other.

Struggles to access education as must support family.

There aren't many opportunities for Alex other than online.

### What We'll Do

Ensure that our work takes care of all parts of our health and prevents issues before they start. Empower communities to help themselves and each other and use a family and locality model for planning and delivering our services.

**Hi! I'm Jayden,** this is what my life looks like.

Very active and likes playing football at the local park.

Eats home grown foods.

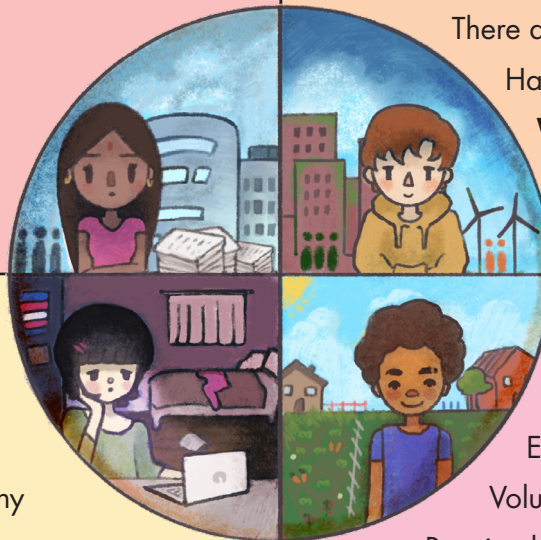
Volunteers at local charity teaching IT to the elderly.

Received government grant to study abroad.

Has lots of friends and meets them regularly.

### What We'll Do

Ensure we collaborate with our communities to create solutions, increase the availability of parks and green spaces and make sure education gives children and young people skills and emotional resilience for the future.



Disappearing World

Recovering World

## Positive Social Change



# Our 2040 vision

## Children and Young People's Strategic Alliance



The world is seen through my eyes

### I am happy, healthy and well

We will get upstream on issues by ensuring that current use of resources focuses on a holistic prevention approach.

We will commit that children are at the heart of all of the decisions of public services. Children will feature as part of the terms of reference across all partnership boards and strategies.

We will commit to ensuring that children and young people have got affordable, accessible and sufficient opportunity for activities which are fun.

We will challenge child poverty and reduce the barriers that children, young people and families who live in poverty face.

### I am safe in all spaces

We will protect, enhance and build more clean and green spaces which are safe and accessible for all, and which improve mental wellbeing.

Schooling – We will ensure that children and young people are safe in school and feel that they belong.

Housing – We will provide high quality, affordable, efficient houses that support a strong sense of community

We will connect children with trusted adults to enable them to have good, sustainable, practical and emotional support.

### I have a voice and I am heard

We will ensure that all children are listened to and that this impacts upon the design of our services.

We will engage and coproduce integrated services with children, young people and parents so they co-produce and shape services that impact upon them.

We will develop a Youth Council to enable the influence of children and young people at a local, regional, and national level.

We will strengthen the voice of children who are disproportionately under- or over-represented.

### I am hopeful and excited for the future

We will focus on educating and employing residents to create pathways for people with lived experience to pass on their knowledge to young people.

We will work with the education system to ensure that the curriculum includes more skills for life and more cultural education.

We will nurture children's aspiration and ambition from the very start.

We will support children to have the opportunity to access good quality jobs locally.

Co-production

Contributing Citizenship

Social Justice

# What our strategy will mean for children and young people growing up in Walsall

## What will our priorities look like in practice?

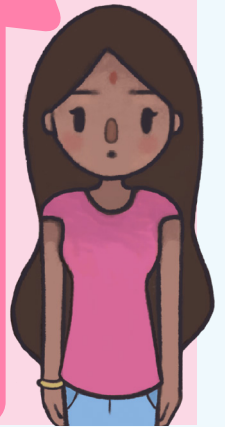


### I'm happy, healthy, and well because:

- I walk to school, through green spaces and I feel safe doing so
- My healthy life was prioritised from the start with my parents, once I was old enough, I learned and understood the importance of making healthy lifestyle choices and feel supported to make these
- I feel able and supported to cope with life's challenges, I'm able to work through them, recover from them and learn from them to improve my future
- I'm actively engaged in my community

### I have a voice and I am heard because:

- I feel proud of growing up in Walsall and part of building Walsall's future
- I understand and feel connected to Walsall's history and excited about its future as a place and feel I can contribute to this
- I get regular communication to what changes are being made because of what I have said
- I'm being asked if things are getting better for me on a regular basis
- I have lots of opportunities to get involved in shaping services and making decisions on issues that are important to me
- No matter my background, ethnicity or whether I feel confident or not in speaking out, I feel my voice is equally represented



Child  
Friendly  
Borough

### I am hopeful and excited about my future because:

- I'm ready for school
- I have an environment that supports me in learning
- I have a great understanding of the world around me
- I'm positively engaged with in education that meet my needs
- I want to continue to live and work in Walsall
- I have the skills that will help me in getting a good job and be resilient
- I feel that Walsall is providing me with lots of opportunities to skill up young people for being part of developing a greener future



### I am safe in all spaces

- There has been lots of improvements in my area – it looks and feels better
- I use green space near where I live for unstructured play and meet up with my friends or meet new friends
- I can afford to live and stay in Walsall
- I have a house which is of good quality, spacious for my family and has access to green space
- There are lots of safe and affordable activities for me to engage with and meet friends
- No matter my background or ethnicity I feel I belong in my community





# How will we know we've been successful?

## I'm happy, healthy, and well

Smart places measurement of use of parks during school time.

Health data - healthy weight, inequality data, reducing gaps, infant mortality rates.

Reduction of number of children that need (repeat) specialist statutory interventions.

Reduction in waiting list and children who do not attend appointments.

Under 18 conception rate.

## I have a voice and I am Heard

Improved uptake of universal services.

Positive feedback.

Number of children involved in decision making and make up (diversity).

Evidence of feedback loop in decision making.

## I am hopeful and excited about my future

Numbers of pupils achieving a good level of school readiness and development at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Number of pupils reaching expected standard at key stages.

Increased number of children engaged in further education.

Exclusion rates.

Positive destinations of young people with special educational needs and/or a disability when they leave school.

Increased number of young people in apprenticeships.

Number of young people positively engaged in education and achieving good level of attendance.

## I am safe in all spaces

Regular survey with kids.

Reduction in anti-social behaviour and knife crime.

Less representation of black and mixed heritage boys in the youth justice system.

More young people engaged in positive activities within communities.

Reduction in racism and hate crime.



# Who has committed to driving forward this strategy?



# THIS STRATEGY IS BROUGHT TO YOU BY...

Our walsall strategy has been illustrated and designed by Armani Preet and Pav Moore our two young people who have helped bring the strategy to life through illustration and graphics.

## Where to find us?

If you're interested in contacting us to help design your strategy or think we can best help you visualise your upcoming ideas then get in touch!

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