

“ It has been inspirational and encouraging.”



Walsall women engaged, enabled and empowered to take up new opportunities

“I feel inspired and motivated to do more and chase my dreams, as I have realised there is so much more to discover about me.”

“The programme has been interesting, and I have enjoyed meeting new people.”

The above quotes were written by some of the women who took part in the Walsall Empowering Women Workshop in May 2019 over five days at Walsall College – The Hub.

Donna is one of three Walsall for All Community Connectors who has supported the women throughout their journey. She said: ***“It’s been inspirational to see how far all of the women have come from Day 1 to Day 5. It’s really been an incredible journey for all of us and for them.”***

Ten women from different areas of the borough came together at the workshops to learn how to build self-confidence and self-esteem, recognise existing skills,

identify personal and career aspirations and explore entrepreneurial opportunities.

On the last day, the women celebrated their progress and received certificates to recognise their achievements. They also heard from Ritu Sharma (Inspirational Speaker), Angela (Holiday Inn) and Kerry (Steps to Work), who inspired the women to move forward and have more confidence than ever before to take on new challenges and opportunities.

In addition, Bally Pahal (DWP Operational Lead) has secured wellbeing sessions to ensure there is ongoing support for the women after completion of the programme.

The Empowering Women Workshops relate to our third priority area Working and Contributing Together. In our plan, we have committed to working with our partners to support residents to access employment, education and training opportunities, including women in the local community, and to better understand their specific needs.

Read more on Page 2

Walsall women engaged, enabled and empowered to take up new opportunities cont.

Kerry's Story



Kerry (aged 41), was one of the participants. She found out about the workshops that were shared on Facebook. She said:

"I'm really happy with the sessions. I found them really interesting. They've been really helpful as to where I am at the moment. They've really fitted in. I've learnt about barriers to moving forward, applying for jobs and interview techniques." Following the third day of the workshops, Kerry went to Walsall College and booked on to a careers interview to identify potential opportunities.

Gerry Lyng, Partnerships Manager for Department for Work and Pensions said: ***"In response to MHCLG Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper, DWP nationally confirmed: We will provide additional funding to Jobcentre Plus in the Integration Areas so they can support more people from the most isolated communities into work, identifying and delivering new interventions to address local employment challenges as an important part of the new Local Integration Strategies."***

This project has been jointly organised by Walsall for All, Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Aaina Community Hub and Walsall Black Sisters Collective.

Community Connectors

Throughout the whole process, the women have been supported by the Community Connectors Hayley, Donna and Bindy.

The three Community Connectors are based in the community and are working with partners to help the women with improving their self-confidence and belief, offering support in a non-judgmental manner, learning, training and employment opportunities, increasing social networks and making positive lifestyle changes.

Tailored support and advice is also available, which includes benefits, budgeting, childcare, CV writing, work calculations and much more.

They run coffee mornings every Wednesday morning at Gios Italian (Ryecroft Community Hub) from 9am to 12pm and Friday mornings at Caldmore Community Gardens from 9:15am to 11:30am.



From left-to-right: Bally (Operational Lead), Donna, Bindy & Hayley (Community Connectors)

To find out more, attend a coffee morning or if you have any questions, please contact one of the Community Connectors - **Hayley (07741 231 911), Donna (07917 473 733) or Bindy (07788 360 148)**

Alternatively, you can email: **walsall.communityconnectors@dwp.gov.uk**

Let's Talk About It

'Let's Talk About It' is funded by the Government's Controlling Migration Fund. Launched in December 2018, it aims to encourage community groups to improve English language skills among residents. Communicating in English is crucial to tackling isolation, increasing employment levels and supporting integration.

Other organisations in Walsall have also delivered Let's Talk About It projects:

- Aaina Community Hub
- All Saints Church Darlaston
- Black Country Innovate CIC
- Brownhills Community Association
- European Welfare Association CIC
- Manor Farm Community Association
- Mindful Gifts CIC
- Refugee and Migrant Centre
- SOORA Association
- Walsall Creative Factory
- Walsall Hindu Forum

In Walsall for All, we will develop an ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) Intelligence Unit to support people to access ESOL opportunities.

In the short term, adults with poor English language skills will have a single point of contact within the council to register for ESOL classes and learners will be referred to the most suitable provision for them.

In the long term, we hope to see an increased uptake of ESOL activities and improved partnership working among ESOL providers across the sectors.

For more information, contact Sarah.Oakley@walsall.gov.uk or call **01922 653 086**

Nash Dom CIC: A Case Study



Nash Dom are delivering a number of sessions on improving English, focused on daily life skills, healthy lifestyles, budget planning and much more.

The first cohort of learners recently completed the 12-week course and received certificates to recognise their achievements.

“When the people came for the first time, they were not confident in their English writing, but after a few sessions, they learned how to communicate and how to ask for needs, such as ordering food in a restaurant, buying from a shop, how to spell their names and give basic details. The lessons have had a big impact in their lives due to the English barrier and this is improving by each session.”

- Bogdan Stanculet (Project Coordinator, Nash Dom CIC)

For further information about this programme: call **07531 090 695** or email info@nashdomcic.org



Learners taking part in an ESOL class run by Nash Dom

Walsall Works

Our next articles on Walsall Works, Walsall Housing Group and Black Country Impact focus on supporting individuals to access employment, education and training and employers giving back to the community. Increased participation in work or volunteering helps broaden people's social networks, confidence, knowledge and skills - leading to a thriving and better integrated Walsall.

Walsall Works is a Walsall Council programme designed to support local people with finding jobs, apprenticeships and training. Their aim is to raise aspirations of local residents and help them to access training that will help increase their skills and give access to local jobs created by local employers. The programme offers impartial advice to support Walsall residents of any age. They have a number of job clubs where residents can gain one-to-one support from an Employment Adviser.

A Supported Employment Adviser within the Adult Social Care team can support Walsall Works residents who have either a disability, learning difficulties or residents that have previously been long-term carers and are re-entering employment.



Walsall works Jobs | Apprenticeships | Training

Are you looking for a **Job, Apprenticeship or Training?**

Visit Walsall Works **EXPO**

Walsall's largest jobs fair

Thursday
5 September 2019
10.00am-4.00pm

The Hub
Walsall College
WS2 8ES

For more information:
www.walsallworks.com
01922 654353

Walsall Council  walsallworks  @walsallworks

Walsall Works Upcoming Event



Walsall Works host a number of employability events which are open and free for anyone to attend. Their next EXPO takes place on Thursday 5th September from 10am to 4pm at The Hub, Walsall College.



Walsall Works Partner Awards



Walsall Works Partners recognised at a ceremony at Walsall College Hub earlier this year

The whole of Walsall benefits when businesses and organisations help their neighbours and local communities to prosper.

Walsall Council values the work carried out by local employers and since 2018 has been recognising socially-minded businesses and organisations through the Walsall Works Partner Awards.

Partners of Walsall Works have been able to demonstrate that they look beyond their own business and have been involved in a wide range of activities that benefit local people, communities and the wider economy.

This activity can include engaging with schools to increase the aspiration of their students, targeting their recruitment on long-term unemployed or vulnerable

people, investing in the local supply chain or helping charities and voluntary organisations to deliver their services. As a quality standard, the awards are divided into three classes; bronze, silver and gold. On 21 March, the first round of 2019 partners were announced at a ceremony at Walsall College Hub. This included a record number of new Gold Partners, with six local employers being able to demonstrate leadership in the delivery of social value. The Gold Partners were ZF Lemforder, Lovell Partnerships, whg, Walsall College, AF Blakemore and the Midcounties Co-operative.

Further information can be found on their website www.walsallworks.com

Twitter: [@WalsallWorks](https://twitter.com/WalsallWorks)

Facebook: [@WalsallWorks](https://www.facebook.com/WalsallWorks)

Alternatively you can call the team on **01922 654 353**.

Walsall Housing Group (whg): Case Study

whg is flying the flag for Walsall for All's third priority: Working and Contributing Together. They are fully committed to increasing the levels of diversity in their workforce and establishing an inclusive work environment. They have been recognised as a Walsall Works Gold Partner for the second year running for the work they do in improving the lives of people across the borough.

They are a committed Disability Confident employer and they recognise the importance of this to allow them to recruit and retain people with disabilities. Through their regular recruitment activities they have supported a large number of local residents to apply for whg vacancies.

Applicants who have declared a disability and meet the essential criteria are automatically shortlisted for interview. Additionally, all whg vacancies are advertised via whg's Employment & Training Team and their website. This team ensures whg vacancies are distributed locally to a range of local partner organisations, as well as directly to unemployed customers they are working with as part of a caseload approach. whg provides the necessary coaching support to disadvantaged or vulnerable customers to maximise their success in their job applications. With this in mind, they have successfully employed Walsall people from vulnerable groups across a number of different roles in line with their Equality and Diversity policies.

As a positive action employer, this year they have been successful in recruiting women into construction roles within



Georgia Robinson, participant in whg's UPLIFT, Women in Construction Programme.

their organisation. Using a targeted apprenticeship campaign, they actively encouraged female applicants to apply and held an open day at their main office in Walsall town centre. As a result of a successful recruitment campaign, they have taken on female apprentices. Georgia Robinson, 21, (pictured above) signed up to UPLIFT, whg's new Women into Construction Programme, as she felt it would help her find work.

She said: ***"I wanted to learn painting and decorating to help me get a job. I'm all for women working in a trade and would tell anyone thinking of doing the course to just go for it because it's so worth it."***

Julie Haywood, whg's Director of Community Investment said: ***"At whg, we are passionate about helping our customers to thrive and having a positive impact on their lives through offering a whole range of support across the organisation."***

Walsall Works said: ***"Since becoming our first gold partner, whg have increased their focus on social value and are looking to expand this even further."***



Black Country Impact

Black Country Impact supports young adults aged 16-29 to break down the barriers that may be holding them back from finding work, improving their skills or gaining qualifications. Black Country Impact is a £51 million scheme to help young adults in Sandwell, Dudley, Walsall and Wolverhampton gain the skills they need to get into work. The money for the project has come from the European Social Fund (£17 million), from the Government's Youth Employment Initiative (£17 million) plus potential match funding of up to £8 million from the National Lottery Community Fund and other partners.



Apprenticeships | Jobs | Training | Work Experience

GET ADVICE AND GUIDANCE with Black Country Impact Walsall

Offering a bright future for young adults aged 16-29*

- Support in securing a job
- Education opportunities
- Apprenticeship opportunities
- Training courses

Health & Social Care | Construction | Media | Creative | Digital | Engineering | Technology | Soft Skills and more**

For one-to-one tailored support and advice in Walsall call:

01922 654 364

www.walsall.gov.uk/blackcountryimpact

@Impact_Walsall *Aged 16-29 and not in education, employment or training. **Subject to availability.

ONE TO ONE SUPPORT, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

Black Country Impact | National Lottery Community Fund | European Union | Walsall Council

The project is leading up to £51 million of funding made up of £17 million from the Government's Youth Employment Initiative, £17 million from the European Social Fund and £17 million from the National Lottery Community Fund and other partners.

Samuel's Story

Samuel was 23 years old at the point of signing with BC Impact, having self referred he felt low in confidence and self-esteem. Samuel had completed his degree in Business and Accounting in June 2015 and for the last two years had been unable to gain employment. Samuel spent time supporting his family's business as a manual labourer.

Although passionate about finance Samuel was giving up on gaining work in his chosen sector and was considering gaining manual work. Samuel worked with his BC Impact adviser to identify a way forward, by training to complete a Sage Line 50 in payroll he would be able to gain experience and a way into an employer by means of a basis accounts role. The BC Impact adviser was able to arrange this through the programme. In the mean time, Samuel was able to spend time with his adviser, researching suitable vacancies and gaining information on the type and nature of apprenticeship he could apply for. Samuel was introduced to the national apprenticeship website, where he was able to upload and apply for job roles. The adviser was able to discuss and promote opportunities to Samuel which supported him on his journey, increasing his confidence each step of the way. His adviser arranged for him to attend PTP training in Walsall to discuss some of the many apprenticeship vacancies available.

Samuel gained a position he identified himself, with the support of the skills he had learned from working with his adviser and started work at Seva Care HQ as a Sales Ledger and Finance Apprenticeship on 04/12/2017. Samuel is delighted at being given an opportunity to develop his future career and no longer has to consider manual labouring work.

For further information please contact the Walsall team on **01922 654 364** or email **BCImpact@walsall.gov.uk**

Businesses and Employers Supporting Integration

As part of our third priority, **Working and Contributing Together**, we have committed to working with businesses/employers to link in to our long-term plan. Working in partnership with local businesses will ensure workforces represent the people of Walsall and contribute to supporting communities and promoting integration.



We have a dedicated officer in our team that will help create partnerships and encourage businesses to share positive stories about their work to support individuals and communities.

We have started to work closely with the Walsall Economic Board to look at how employers and businesses can support integration. On the 20th June 2019, we contributed to a meeting focused on **making a difference and businesses giving back to the community** (known as Corporate Social Responsibility). We presented the Walsall for All programme and discussed raising aspirations together in Walsall, increasing employability and well-being and connecting with existing resources to bridge the gaps.

A series of meetings will take place to develop our joint work. Our recent meeting on the 24th June 2019 focused on the **Role of Employers in Integration**. Attendees included Walsall Council, Walsall College, Barhale, Walsall Economic Board, Clinical Commissioning Group, brap, Department for Work and Pensions, Nash Dom CIC, One Walsall and Accord. Discussions focused on barriers to integration, the links between aspirations and integration and what businesses can do to ensure there are fair opportunities for underrepresented groups. Many attendees also used this opportunity to share best practice, existing projects and experiences.

We would like to thank everyone who contributed, including David Primrose (Walsall for All Board Chair), Manjit Jhooty (Walsall Economic Board), Cheryl Garvey (brap) and facilitators Amanda Spratt, Claire Wills and Jane Kaur-Gill (Walsall Council) and Gerald Nembhard (One Walsall).

We will be agreeing the key next steps with our partners to work towards making Walsall a great place to live, work, learn and socialise.

If you would like to work with us as a business or employer or you would like to share your story, please contact **Zara Khan (Positive Action Officer)** on **01922 652 657**.

Get in touch!

Community, Equality and Cohesion

Walsall Council, Civic Centre, Darwall Street, Walsall, WS1 1TP.

Tel: 01922 655 797

Email: walsallforall@walsall.gov.uk

Website: www.walsallforall.co.uk

Facebook: Walsall for All

Instagram/Twitter: @walsallforall