



Dudley for everyone

The Director of Public Health Annual Report 2019/20





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foreword

This year's annual report focuses on **inclusion** across the life course. Inclusion is an important contributor of good health and wellbeing for the people of Dudley.



Dudley is known as the historical capital of the Black Country – often cited for its’ rich industrial heritage being at the heart of the industrial revolution. The borough is now a vibrant, multi-cultural place with strong, diverse communities. It is an exciting time to live and work in Dudley as it continually regenerates and evolves - but it is important that with this change, our Dudley residents are included and remain central to this journey.

In the course of developing this report, the world came to standstill as we fought a battle against Coronavirus. Priorities changed as the country focused its efforts and energies to protect and save lives. This too was the case in Dudley as we rapidly changed the way we worked, whilst still finding creative ways to engage with our communities for the purpose of this report , but also to respond to Covid-19.

We were not able to engage as widely as we hoped and were limited in what we could do in the community, but despite this what we did see in Dudley was the importance that inclusive communities and places played in the Covid-19 response.

So why Inclusion? Inclusion despite meaning different things to different people, ultimately is about having a sense of belonging and sense of place and therefore has an important contribution to make towards improving health and wellbeing of the population and addressing health inequalities.

My hope for this report is that by focusing on inclusion, we not only recognise, celebrate and continue to build upon the great work that has

been carried out, but more importantly we take the recommendations from this report as a call to action for all our partners and stakeholders to come together, and commit to making Dudley a place for everyone.

This report is a strategic statement from which we will work hard to set out our actions and intentions in a transparent way, to ensure a sense of belonging is achieved for whole communities. A priority of this annual report is to explore actions aimed at enhancing the prospect of more inclusive places within Dudley and recognising the enrichment our population gains by being more inclusive. In doing this, it was important to me, that we adopted a community-led approach and also involved independent researchers to capture the voices of our community.

We have showcased some wonderful case studies where inclusion has been at the heart of the great work our communities and services do. As we move to a situation where living with Covid-19 becomes the norm I encourage you to continue to share your stories and examples of good practice around inclusion so that we can continue learning together. I hope this report inspires all to continue to build upon, commit to, and reflect upon how we can embed inclusion in all we do.

Despite living in unprecedented times, it is more crucial than ever that we work together to strive for inclusivity. This report is both a sentiment and dedication to the resilience of all those who live and work in Dudley.

Bal Kaur
Interim Director of Public Health (2020)



I am delighted to welcome this year's annual report on inclusion. As Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care, I am encouraged that public health have chosen to focus on this issue for their 2019/20 report.

We have a rich, and proud, heritage within Dudley consisting of many diverse communities. It is important for us to explore how, and what, makes our local people feel connected, involved and included in their neighbourhood.

I share Bal's view of the benefits of an inclusive society; from economic growth, higher employment, social cohesion and wellbeing. Leading with a community and asset-based approach to inclusion means that we can hear on the ground what it really means to feel included, and importantly

we can learn how to make this a part of everyday practice.

I am encouraged by the work that has been carried out so far, and I echo Bal's hope that following this report, all partners will make a commitment to strive for the common goal of making Dudley a place for everyone.

Councillor Nicolas Barlow
*Cabinet Member for Health
and Adult Social Care*



Acknowledgements and list of contributors

I would like to thank the following colleagues, partners and stakeholders for their contributions:

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Our Community Researchers:

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02

local context

This year's annual report focuses on **inclusion** across the life course – the following figures provide a snapshot of the key headlines for the population of Dudley

Figure 1: Population pyramid, Dudley Borough 2019 Mid-year population estimates

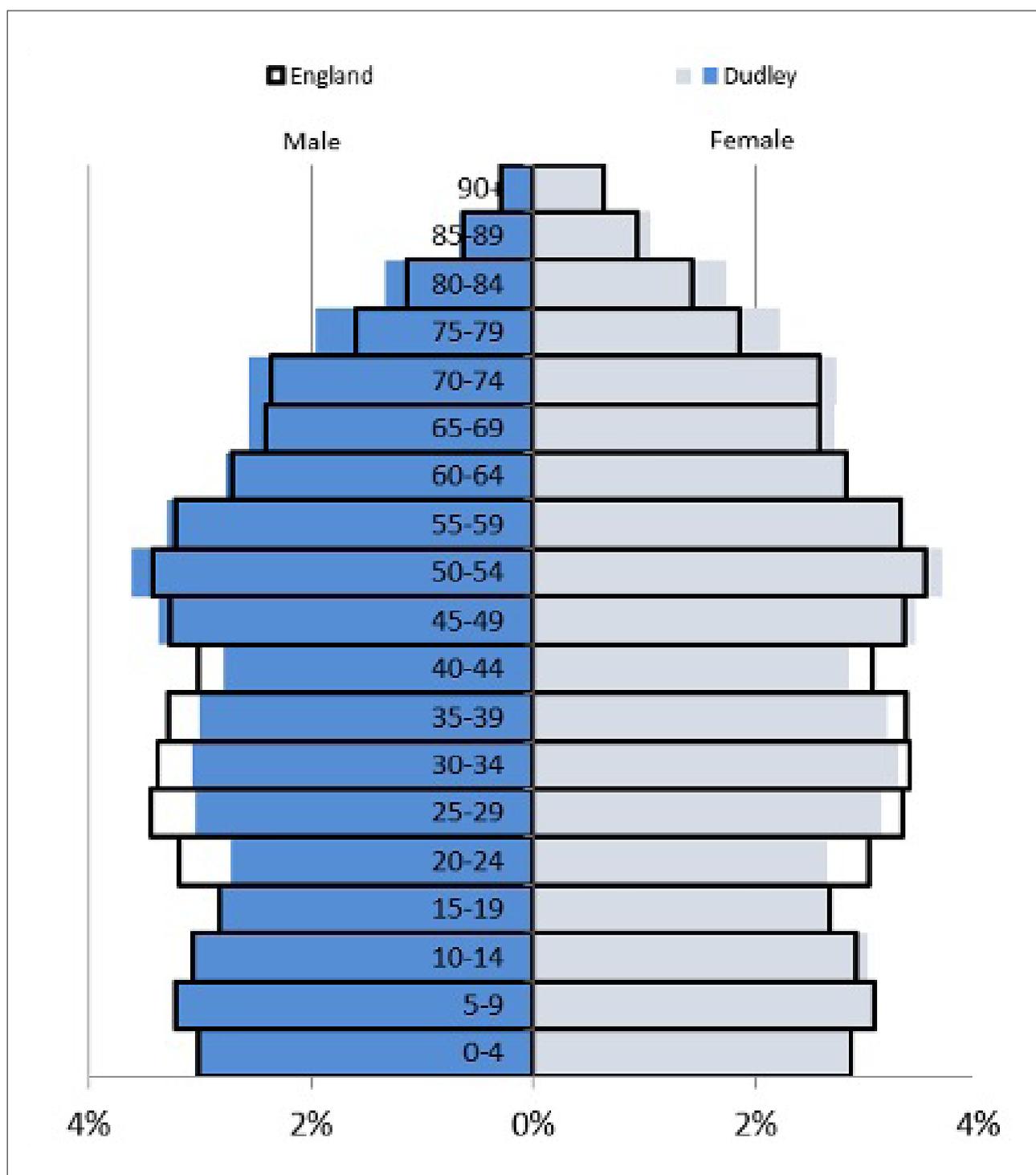
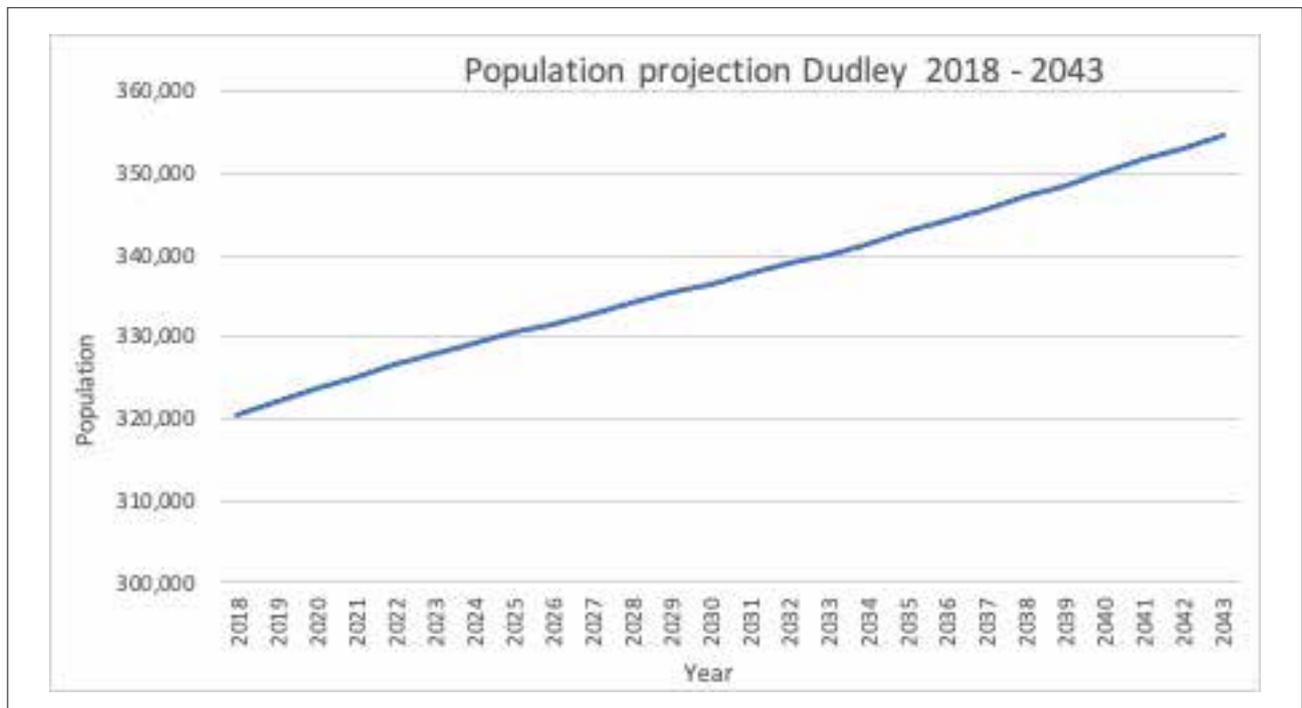


Figure 1: shows the most recent population estimates for Dudley (the two shades of blue) with England (solid black lines). Overall, Dudley and England have similar population however there are a few differences. Dudley has an older population with a higher proportion of men and women aged 65 and over than England. There is also a smaller proportion of men and women aged 20-44.

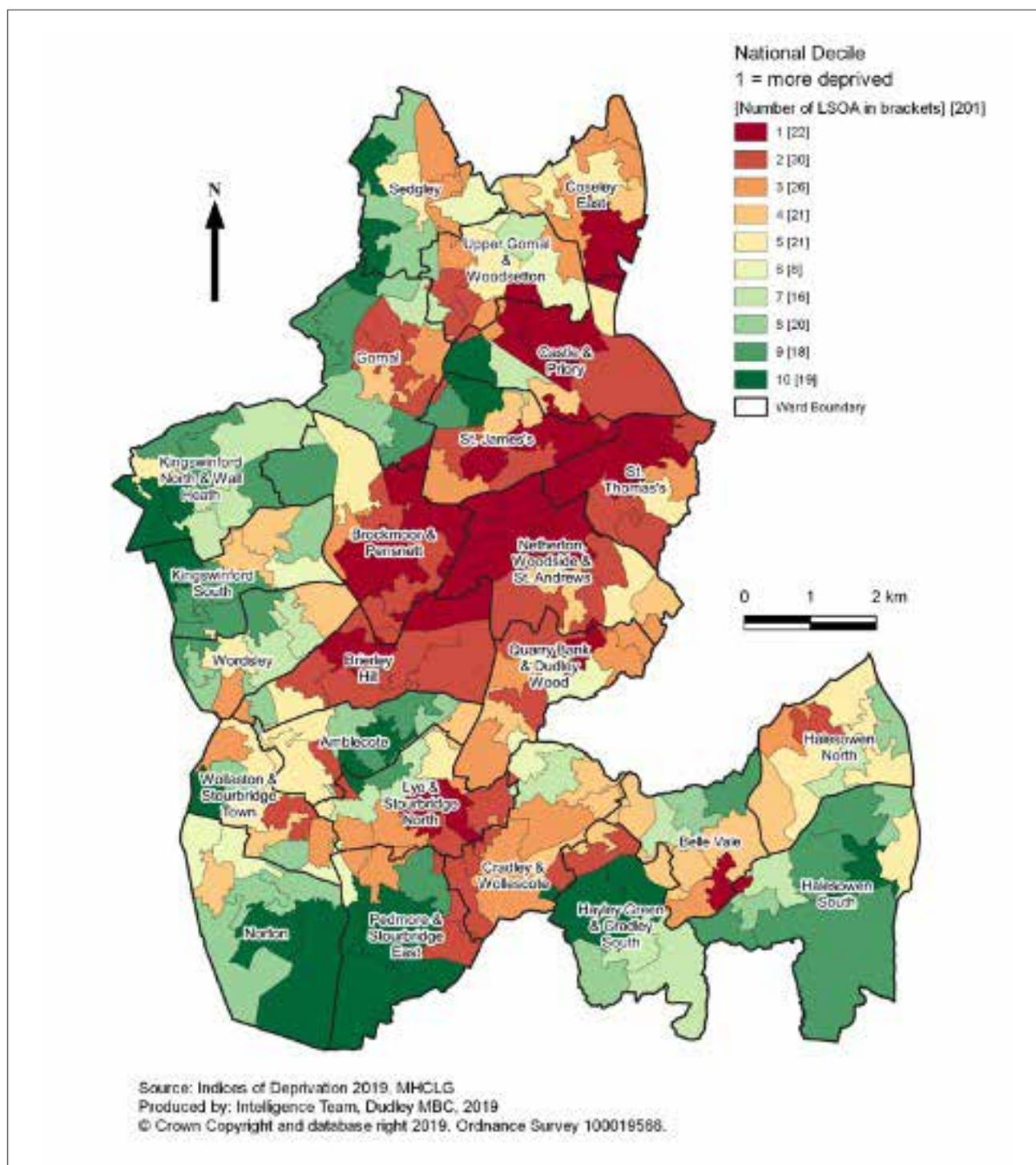
Figure 2: Population projections, Dudley Borough 2018 based



The population of Dudley is projected to increase consistently between 2018 and 2043. Currently the estimated population of Dudley is 321,600 (Mid-year population estimates 2019, Office for National Statistics). The population is projected to grow to 355,000 by 2043 an increase of 33,400 people, almost 10% of the current population. Dudley’s population is expected to grow more slowly Compared to other areas of the country.

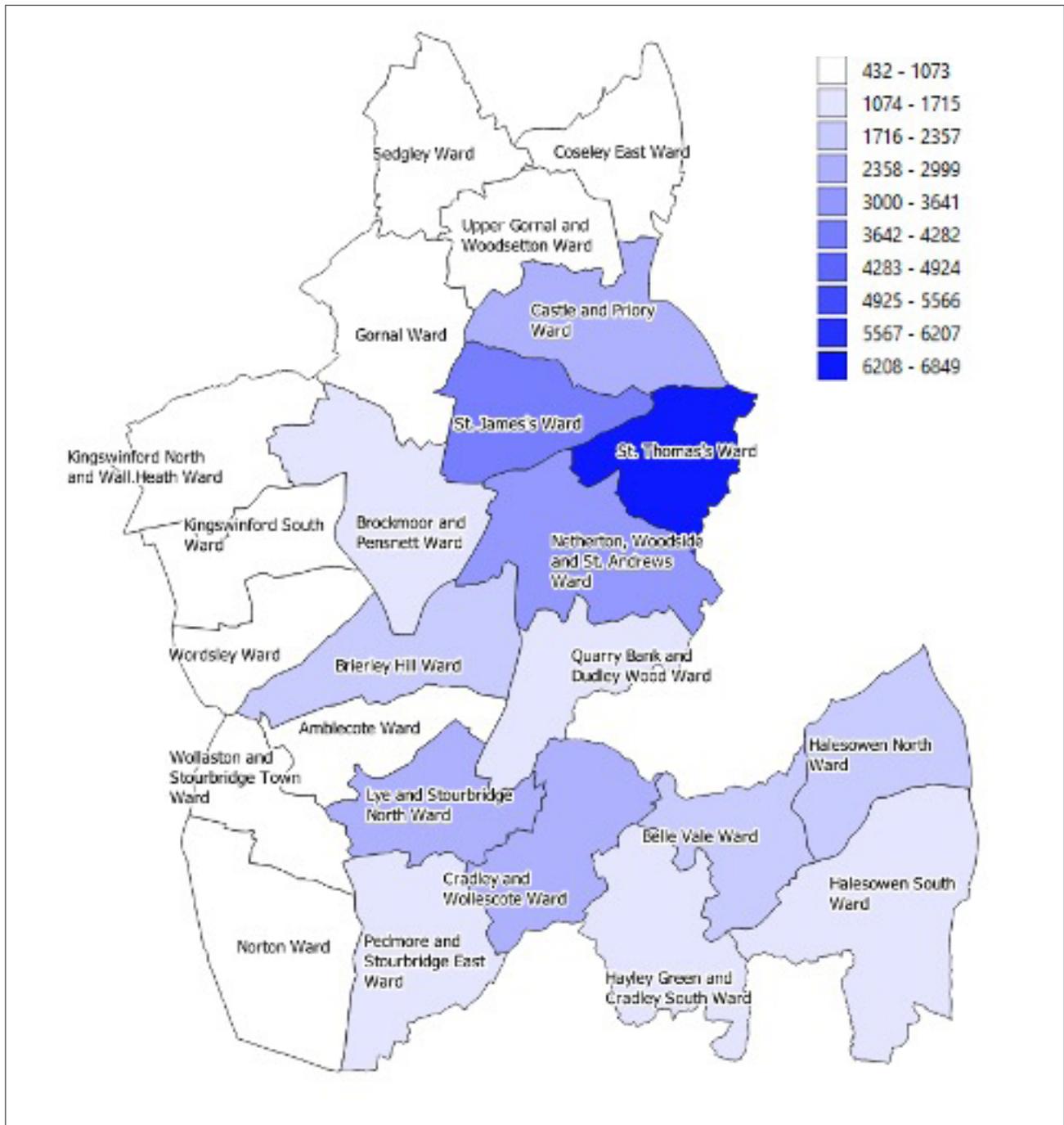


Figure 3: Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019 by Lower Super Output Area (LSOA), Dudley Borough



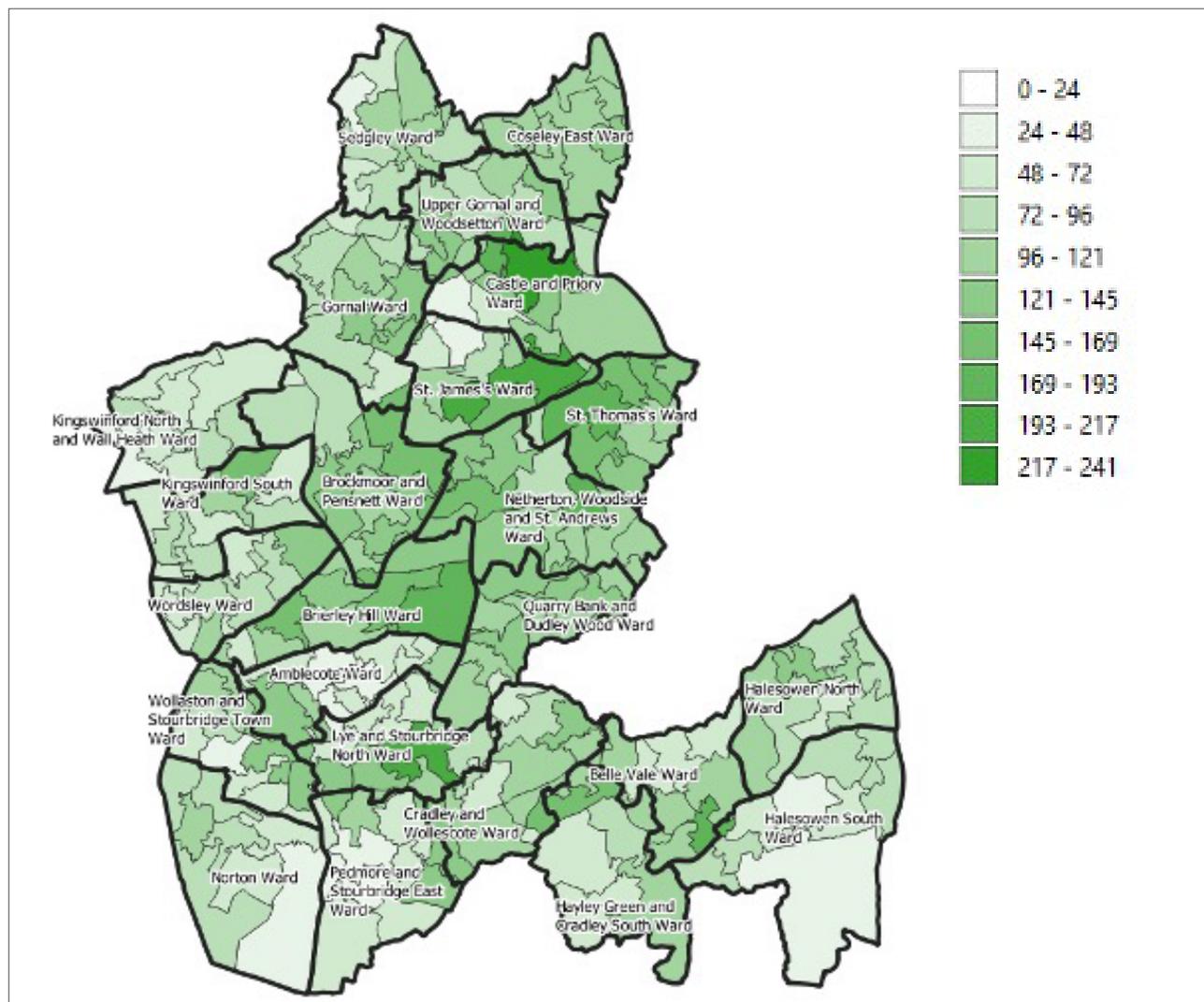
Overall, Dudley Borough is ranked in the middle of all local authorities in England for its level of deprivation. This shows some of the local variation and Dudley Borough has some of the most deprived areas in the country as well as some of the least deprived. Figure 3 shows the variation with the red areas being the most deprived and the dark green the least.

Figure 4: Locally modelled Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) 2020 by ward, Dudley Borough



Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) residents in Dudley tend to live in the Eastern areas of the borough. Figure 4 shows the distribution of BAME residents by ward in Dudley. When the distribution is broken down by age group a slightly different pattern emerges with the older BAME residents being focused around St Thomas's ward and the younger ones having a wider distribution across Dudley Borough.

Figure 5: The number of people reporting bad or very bad health by Lower Super Output Area (LSOA), 2011 census, Dudley Borough



Information of people living with bad or very bad health can be difficult to define and collect using routine data sources since bad or very bad health is an individual measure and two people with the same general condition might consider their circumstances very differently. The last consistent measure of this was the 2011 national census. This showed that the distribution of people who considered themselves to have bad or very bad health was related to deprivation levels. People who were more deprived more frequently considered their health status to be worse.

Summary

Detailed data on inclusion can be very difficult to pinpoint, partly due to the challenges in people having a shared understanding of inclusion and by nature of people defining it by its inverse. We've tried to provide a few of the key headlines of the population of Dudley. For more information on the population of Dudley Borough please have a look at the Understanding Dudley reports - <https://www.allaboutdudley.info/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/04/Understanding-Dudley-2020.html>



03

introduction

The purpose of the Public Health Annual Report is to demonstrate the state of health within communities. It should add value over and above existing data and health intelligence, which is readily available, and should present an independent view to inform local people about the health of their community.

For this report Dudley Public Health have chosen to focus on the topic of inclusion. Inclusion is a broad topic, and this can make an easy definition difficult to come by but essentially is based on the belief that all people in society are entitled to the same benefits and resources (irrespective of someone's protective characteristics). There are multifaceted benefits to an inclusive society which encompass: economic growth, productivity and employment, social cohesion and wellbeing.

In undertaking this report it was important to explore actions aimed at enhancing the prospect of more inclusive places within Dudley and to recognise how the whole population can gain by being more inclusive.

It was also important to have an inclusive and independent approach therefore the Ideas Alliance, an independent research company, were asked to facilitate a community research process which has informed part of the report and shaped the recommendations for improving inclusion.

Building on strengths using assets and place-based approaches

As well as having health needs, all communities have **health assets** that can contribute to positive health and wellbeing outcomes. For this report, an asset-based approach was used meaning we listened and engaged with the skills, expertise and experience of local people. Recognising assets helps value community strengths and ensure everyone has access to them.

A **place-based approach** targets an entire community and aims to address issues that exist at the ward level. This approach is becoming increasingly popular in healthcare initiatives as they allow the insights of local people to guide change.

In essence, community-led approaches are important for all aspects of public health. This report therefore includes case studies within Dudley where the principles of inclusion are being translated into effective action where local people are making things happen in their community.

If we are to improve inclusion in Dudley and make Dudley a place for everyone, we need to work together to continue building on our strengths and embrace the learning from this report to create an inclusive culture.



what we did

We wanted to learn about inclusion in the borough; what it meant to people, how they felt and identified examples of agencies and community groups working in inclusive and diverse ways. To achieve this, the following 3 stages were undertaken:

Stage 1 – Community Research

This stage involved working with local people in Dudley and asking them to reach out into their own communities to explore what the community experience have been around inclusion and starting to think about inclusion from a very localised point of view. A team of 8 local people who were interested in taking part in the community research were recruited by Ideas Alliance (the independent research company), through existing networks, community venues and via Healthwatch Dudley. After a series of training sessions (which included: research methods, identifying networks, listening skills, building rapport, recording information and safeguarding), the community researchers co-designed a set of questions around inclusion all of which were broad, and avoided any jargon to support with the peer to peer research process. The community researchers worked in partnership with key members of Dudley Council staff and elected members to agree what areas of inclusion they most wanted to focus on within this research. The questions were piloted to ensure that they dug deeper into people's perceptions and stories.

The community researchers sought out people within their local networks and began recording discussions around what inclusion means to the people of Dudley. Ideas Alliance analysed the data and shared the findings with both the researchers and the steering group for further reflection. The findings of the community research have provided some strong direction to reframe current narratives and approaches towards inclusion.

For the purposes of this research we defined a peer as: 'someone who has something in common with you'. This could be a neighbour, a family member, another worshipper, or someone with similar life experiences.

The benefits of using a community research method include:



Local people who have been recruited and trained are able to connect with a diverse range of friends, family, neighbours, fellow worshippers, shop keepers and any others who may not typically engage with more formal research methods



Those interviewed may be more open and honest in their research answers than when asked by 'professional' researchers - they may feel more comfortable and therefore more open



Local community researchers have the opportunity to use and enhance their skills within the community



There will be a greater connection and ownership of the findings amongst local people



It brings communities and paid workers within the Council into closer dialogue and mutual understanding

Stage 2 – Case Studies

Through conversations we found examples of inclusion in practice across Dudley where local partners, organisations and communities have demonstrated the vision of the borough as; ‘a place of healthy, resilient, safe communities with high aspirations and the ability to shape their own future’. To showcase some of the wonderful examples, we visited and listened to learn more about how they have approached inclusivity within their settings.

The wonderful examples included in this report demonstrate the meaningful steps already being taken to create a Dudley for everyone.



Another method used to gather views on inclusion and contribute to the report was workshops, these were carried out with; our local partners, the voluntary sector and stakeholders.

Using place and asset-based approaches, these workshops were often facilitated by local people and community researchers.

The learning and recommendations from these workshops will also be added to the vision, working towards making Dudley inclusive for everyone and contribute to the wider Forging the Future Vision for Dudley.



'The wonderful examples included in this report demonstrate the meaningful steps already being taken to create a Dudley for everyone.'



05

what we found

Across the different stages of work the following 6 key themes were found;

01 **Welcoming and friendly**

02 **Open to all**

03 **Learning together, close to home**

04 **Connections not services**

05 **Information about what's on**

06 **Trusted people**

01 Welcoming and friendly

The factor which has most influence on people feeling included is friendliness

Our community research revealed the importance of feeling welcomed. When asked about what makes people feel included, the friendliness of people was most cited. As someone said, “you can have the most wonderful costly provision but if the people hosting it aren’t welcoming and friendly then others will not feel included”.

Kayleigh Mills from Jasmine Road Community Gardens describes this well “We want everyone to feel welcome here, even if they just come into buy a plant”. From its start from a small number of people creating a garden as part of a bigger project that has since closed, Jasmine Road Community Gardens has expanded to welcome new people, in particular those who are disabled, retired or long-term unemployed.

Kayleigh’s advice about how to keep being inclusive is to talk with people, hear what

they are doing, what they want. She helps to make people part of the place, getting them involved and trying things at their own pace. She and her trustees have had first-hand experience of the difficulties some people face and they have a natural focus on “how can we help people feel welcome”.

The Queens Cross Network’s Community hub is open to many disability and carers’ groups. The centre team have received many compliments from visitors about the atmosphere of the hub. People say, “as soon as you walk through the door, you can feel positive vibes here”.

When our community researchers asked people about which community spaces in Dudley, they felt welcome, libraries were mentioned time and again. *Other places cited were:*





Case Study

Jasmine Road Community Gardens (Kayleigh Mills)

Jasmine Road Community Gardens is based in an estate in Dudley but open to the borough as a whole. There is just over an acre of gardens with space offered free to anyone who wants to make use of them, as well as communal gardens where people can work together on shared projects. There are a range of activities for children, free events and opportunities for work experience. They joined the Department of Work and Pensions' Disability Confidence scheme and work with employers to be more disability aware. "We act as a sort of social hub".

How are they inclusive and what's different about them?

Open to and accommodating to everybody

The gardens are open to people of all backgrounds, ages, religions. Kayleigh says: "we want everyone to feel welcome here,

even if they just come in to buy a plant, or oh look at the nice greenery and flowers...it's one of the biggest things.... That's why it was started, and that's how I want to carry it on."

Making people part of the place - This means making sure that people have a role if they want it and can be useful whatever their abilities. "Let's give these people the opportunity to do something that has physical results. Kayleigh herself joined as a volunteer "they were very, very welcoming from the start...I want to continue making people feel how I felt when I first started here"

Very accepting - You can come here even if you're having a bad day, with no risk of judgement. You don't have to come along and do work every day; people can just come along and talk to people if they like.

Decision-makers have shared, lived experience - Many trustees have first-hand experience of the difficulties people are facing or are familiar with what challenges might crop up, and how people might feel excluded. There is a natural focus on “how we make this not happen, how can we help people feel welcome”.

Accessibility - Kayleigh is an advocate of making the organisation more disability accessible. People know Kayleigh has struggled with various disabilities in her life and she is very open about that. “You don’t have to be open with your own challenges, but you won’t be judged if you are”. She pushed for them to join the Disability Confidence Scheme, which aims to get employers to be more disability aware and accessible. At the gardens they say, “This is a thing you want to learn; we will work with you so you can do that”. For example, recently a man with quite severe dyslexia wanted to learn admin skills so they offered things like proof-reading.

Asset-based development - Involving people with different challenges and getting their help to make sure what they are doing fits “I can’t speak for people with dyslexia, so ‘can you read this guys’...” “People feel really valued if they feel like they have an input and are part of the decision process, especially people who are generally excluded”.

Minimal formality and form-filling - Forms are kept to a minimum so that things are not too formalised, and their purpose is explained in the same way to everyone, in plain English.

Treating people the same - “No one wants to be spoken down to and no one wants to be singled out – people who have come from

the job centre and people who have done degrees, they all get the same spiel...treating people the same”.

Their advice on how to keep being inclusive

Talk to people - You have to talk to people. Most of my time here at the gardens is spent talking to people... ‘how’s this working for you guys?’ ‘Oh, that’s a great idea, I’ll look into it’. You can’t get anything done without communication.” Instead of being an aloof figure ‘the chair of the organisation’, talk to people, and listen to them. She says there’s always common ground if you can find it. And find people connected to your charity who people talk to, who know everyone and empower them to be your communicator”.

What is the essence of inclusion? “If you’re going to do inclusion, make sure you involve the people you are going to include”



02 Open to all

Open access places and inclusive activities and events are highly valued

In the community research conversations, people expressed a wish for inclusive events and activities rather than ones for specific people or for specific groups. They valued events that are open to all so that different people and groups come together. This was interesting as our case studies were about people or organisations working with specific groups. However, all these have an element of open access. For instance, Wren's Nest Primary School has an open-door policy to create positive relationships and engagement with parents. If a parent wants to speak to the head teacher or a senior member of staff, they just come to the school office and ask. They will be seen immediately so that worries can be dealt with straight-away rather than parents becoming anxious or issues become magnified.

In other case studies, people are helping certain groups to feel welcome and able to take part in opportunities to make sure they are open to all. Shamim Akhtar from Direxions started with supporting Asian women to overcome barriers that may prevent them from entering education and employment.

Liz Priest, a health visitor based in Lye spent time immersing herself in Roma culture and building trust with the Roma community in order to help them have the same antenatal and early years health care as everyone else.



Case study

Phase Trust (Jayne Sargeant)

Phase Trust is a youth organisation working across Dudley Borough and beyond to deliver a multitude of services that have at their heart a determination that no young person should fall through society's gaps. They are one of the biggest providers of youth services in the area and also reach outside of the borough and seek to influence policy at a regional and national level. Their focus is particularly on behavioural and emotional development. They work with 6-25 year olds and have a particular focus on reaching those who are not engaging with or whose needs would not otherwise be met by statutory provision. There is a strong ethos of 'you're worth it' using positive, strength-based approaches. Being non-judgemental is also important, moving away from 'what's wrong with you' to 'what's happened to you'.

How are they inclusive and what's different about them?

Meeting the needs of the 'hard to reach' - While they provide services to all and any young people, they have a particular focus on reaching those who are not engaging with or whose needs would not otherwise be met by statutory youth provision. As well as an open access community engagement effort, they have a specific 'detached team' which focuses on reaching those young people that others aren't reaching.



Safe and secure places for young people -

To allow them to try out new stuff and build new skills.

Treating the cause, not the symptom - A focus on addressing the core of the issue, not the symptom, so that people are not excluded by provision. "I don't want money to do bereavement counselling, I want money to treat loss in children" – which can be caused by death yes, but also parents separating, being uprooted from school etc.

Shifting focus away from funds - What they tackle is not based on whether there's enough money – it's based on stopping things that "just shouldn't be happening" to young people.

Community and volunteer involvement - There is a volunteer scheme mainly made up of 18-25 year olds who provide positive adult role models to young people, as well as supporting activities; the 'Next Gen'

steering group made up of young people.

Their advice on how to keep being inclusive:

A non-judgemental approach - "Finding a way to have a conversation where we can talk about risks without people feeling stupid for the things they have done or thinking of doing. For instance, if we're talking about exploitation, many young people don't see the risk. If they can tell me what they're thinking about doing I can influence it. If they can tell me why they're at risk that's a win for me."

What is the essence of inclusion? An ethos of 'You're worth it' - Positive, strength-based approach. Moving from 'what's wrong with you' to 'what's happened to you'.

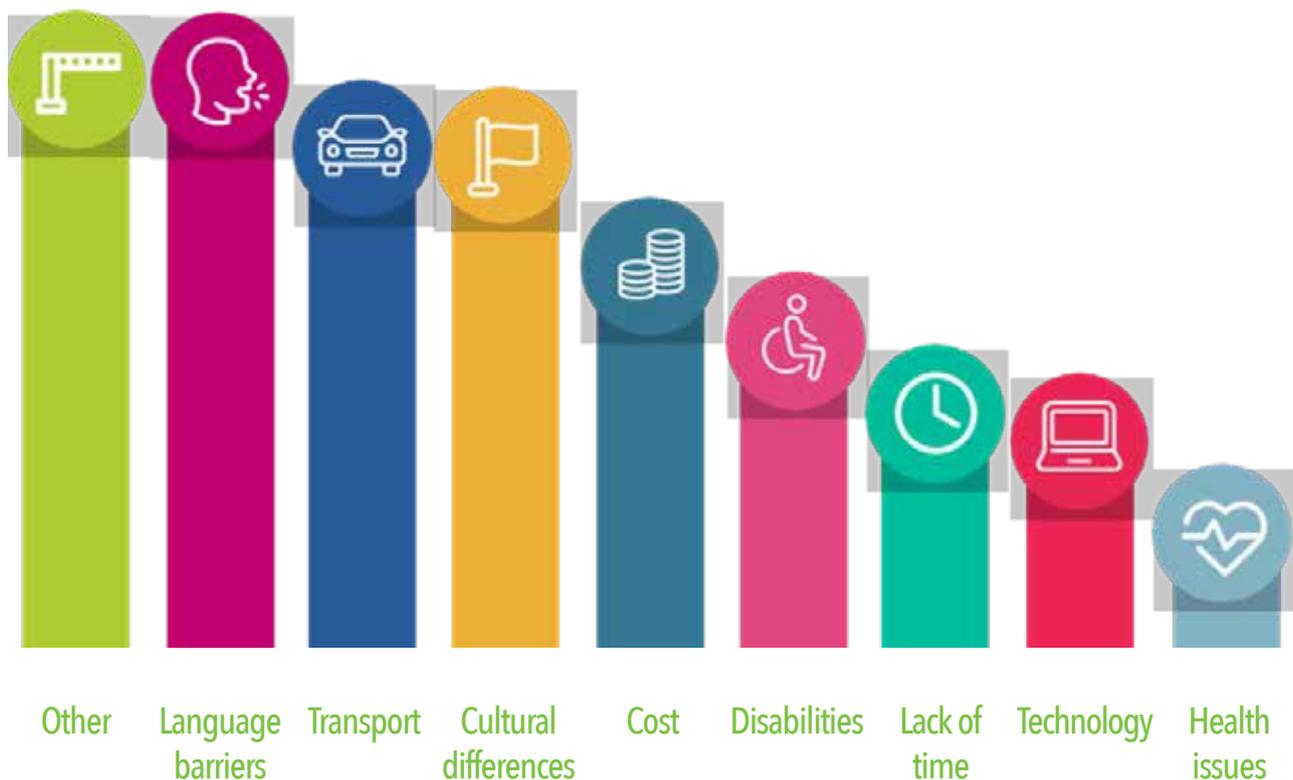


03 Learning together, close to home

Opportunities to learn together without having to travel far are important to people

Our community research told us about the barriers to being included. The barrier most often mentioned was language and several people suggested English courses as a way to create more inclusion. Kayleigh from Jasmine Road Community Gardens also mentioned language, noting that communities can be insular, especially where language is a barrier.

The community research revealed some of their key barriers local people said they faced when not feeling included:



People also talked of the value of learning together and chances to get together locally to discuss common topics and support each other. **Wren's Nest Primary School** is a setting in the community where learning together is a key driver. It has created lots of opportunities for parents and members of the community to take advantage of a range of adult education courses.

Another barrier to inclusion mentioned in the community research was transport which was described as both too expensive and too complicated. This, together with the desire people expressed to build links within their local neighbourhoods, shows there is an appetite for very local events and activities.

In response to a question about how to help people feel more involved, one interviewee suggested “Free English language lessons and free community groups to discuss issues like travelling on public transport.”

A further insight from the research interestingly showed that some people wanted inclusive events – so rather than in specific places (for example churches, mosques) or for specific groups (young people, people with certain health challenges) they wanted events which brought these different groups together. For some local people, a place-based focus was more relevant than one focused on groups or protective characteristics.

Case study

Wren’s Nest Primary School (Sarah Parkes)

Wren’s Nest Primary School is located in one of the most deprived areas of Dudley and as a result has become one of the beacons of inclusivity within the borough. They have had to overcome numerous hurdles, primarily related to convincing apprehensive parents that school is a fundamental part of everyday life and is something their children should attend. The parents themselves can have low self-esteem, some little experience of the wider world and/or poor language skills and the school has had to counterbalance supporting the children to learn alongside supporting the parents to enable children to learn. As well as being a primary school, it offers adult education courses on its premises. Sarah Parkes, the Acting Head Teacher described how the school developed over time.

With the arrival of a new headteacher 15 years age, the school worked hard to build trust with parents first and foremost, asking ‘what shall we do together?’ and starting a culture of aspiration.

The school tested out a number of different approaches and completed some quick fixes to show the parents they were serious about their commitment to the community and its education. For example, they provided ‘workshops’ for parents to work alongside their children in school.

05 What we found

However, it was quickly discovered the parents didn't attend because of their own negative experiences of school. Because of this and to ensure parents also felt included in supporting their children's education, the school changed the title of the sessions to become 'inspire sessions' and the sessions encouraged parents to watch and join in with their child in a lesson. As a result of this, parental engagement improved and continues to be a positive experience in school today.

Over time, as a true community school, Wren's Nest has developed an approach which meant that many things could be done in one place; parents didn't need to be referred on to other services to receive the support they needed. The school has continued to actively seek help and expertise when needed and have developed the skills of the staff to be able to work with some of the most challenging and vulnerable children who present with difficult behaviours and special needs. In this way, no child is turned away from education and exclusion is kept at a minimum. They believe fairness means 'giving each child what they need, not giving each child the same.' A school with such an approach is seen as a beacon of inspiration – giving children life chances for the future and demonstrating what inspiration can achieve in future generations.





How are they inclusive and what's different about them?

Leaders and staff go out into the community - Staff go out into the community to where the parents and families were, rather than expecting them to come to the school to address issues/needs. This involved meeting them in their own homes and going 'above and beyond' when necessary.

Open door policy - If a parent wants to speak to the head teacher or a senior member of staff, they just come to the school office and ask, and they will be seen immediately. This has helped to create positive relationships and engagement with parents.

Informality - The school also has a level of 'informality' which helps to break down the barrier and stigma that can be attached to what is deemed as 'authority in schools.'

Their advice on how to keep being inclusive

Culture change - Leaders and staff team have often had to go against the education system norms in order to keep to their inclusive values.

Being needs led - They have been entirely needs led which has sometimes caused external stakeholders to question their approach, but it has proven successful.

'Bucking the trend' - Other schools see Wren's Nest as different to them and do not always see the benefit of using their innovative thinking and approach. 'Bucking the trend' takes confidence and the ability to listen to people/children's needs in a world that is very noisy.

Support your staff - The school has a strong support structure in place to give staff the confidence to manage children with diverse needs and is committed to responding and adapting to the needs of the community and the ever-changing society in which they live.

What is the essence of inclusion?

'Developing an inclusive approach often takes a culture change which needs to be strongly led and modelled from the top'

04 Connections not services

Connecting and involving people leads to them being active in their communities

An interesting finding from the information our community researchers collected was that very few people mentioned services, either Council or health services. For some local people inclusion to them was about connecting within their neighbourhoods rather than being included in services. This creates an opportunity for us and our partners to explore shifting some focus away from a service perspective to one that is more about facilitating communities to engage with each other in inclusive ways, rather than only being deliverers of services. Not surprisingly, there was a strong link between people feeling involved and being active in their community. Being involved could be anything from being asked what they would like, contributing their expertise and time, through to being part of how decisions are made about what is available.

At **Queens Cross Network**, people who use the centre and activities are involved in decisions about the centre, its activities and in the recruitment of staff. Through their recruitment training, they are now invited to support recruitment processes in other organisations. There are many other opportunities for people to contribute to the service. This was not always the case and the centre has actively worked to turn the culture from one where people were passive recipients of what was on offer to being the driving force and leaders.

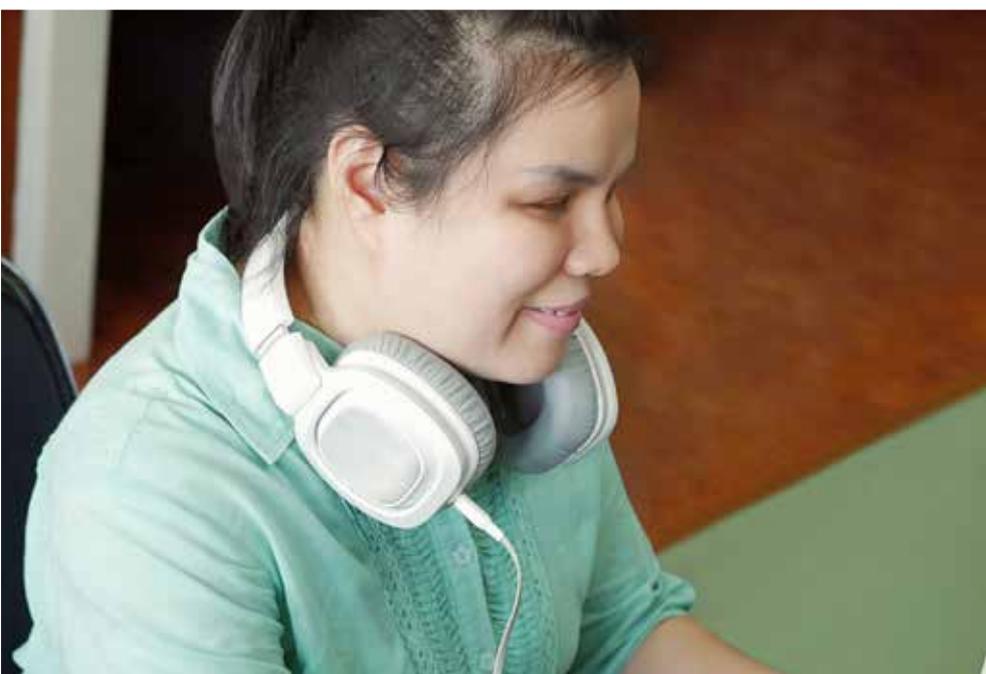


Case study

Queens Cross Network (Jo Leeman)

The Queens Cross Network is a Community hub for people aged 18+ with physical or sensory disability as their primary need. They offer centre based services and activities and run a community service for people who may not be able to, or may not choose to attend the centre itself.

Queens Cross Network has inclusion as a core value which runs through everything they do; but it hasn't always been like this and inclusion is something they have had to work at and continue to adapt to as their services develop. Thirty years ago, the centre had a timetable of events and activities which made it seem rather inflexible and service driven. People attending the service were passive recipients of what was on offer and their input was tokenistic. Over time, the health and social care environment has changed and two decades ago, a new manager started at the centre. He was passionate about inclusion and started to shift the way the centre worked, bringing in a more personalised and person driven approach. One of their notable achievements has been the co-design of a Dignity Charter (with Dudley Centre for Inclusive Living). This charter identifies the behaviours needed for people to treat others with dignity, and it is being promoted across Dudley to provide the core values of inclusion. Queens Cross Network continually check themselves against it.



How are they inclusive and what's different about them?

Service-user led - Centre based activities are developed according to feedback and consultation with the centre users.

Giving ownership - Disability in Action (DIA) is a separately funded, self-managing charity which operates on an informal partnership with the local authority to run services at Queens Cross. The local authority leads on care-based provision, and DIA runs the café, reception, gardening, library, user consultations, events and some therapy-based activities.

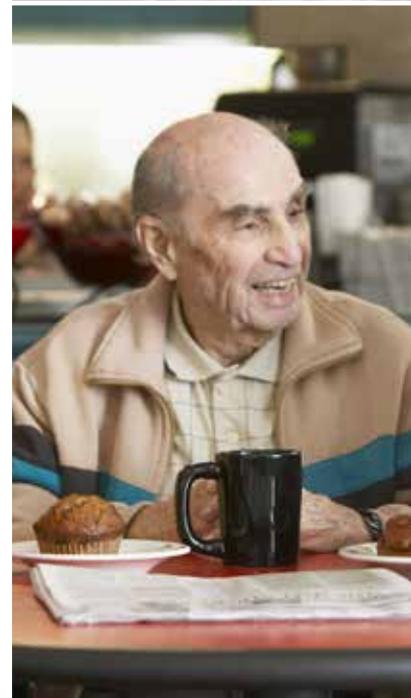
Their advice on how to keep being inclusive

Recognising and championing people's worth - "Many who attend Queens Cross Network enter as people who use the service. But then something magical often happens – they observe the achievements and hard work of other disabled people and realise that they have potential of their own, giving them inspiration to move forward and obtain new skills and interests as volunteers rather than service users."

What is the essence of inclusion?

"People are consulted and involved in doing things for themselves".

A powerful example of starting from the ground up and focusing on using a place-based approach is the Halesowen Business Improvement District (BID) work on dementia and making the town dementia friendly. Different people from across the community came together to create an action plan. From this small start a large number of initiatives have been developed. Vicky Rodgers from Halesowen Business Improvement District says "The momentum of progress has been immense and new people and initiatives join up every month. There has been a real difference made in Halesowen although it has taken a bit of nudging and changing of mindsets. Now, other local people and businesses have seen what can be achieved and are interested in getting involved."





Case study using a place-based approach to inclusion

Halesowen Business Improvement District

Halesowen is a Business Improvement District. This means a levy is charged on all business rate payers in addition to the business rates bill. This levy is used to develop projects which will benefit businesses and therefore the community in the local area. Halesowen BID agreed to start with a focus on Dementia and worked towards making the town dementia-friendly. The initiatives that have been developed include:

- Partnering with Business for Autism
- Chatty café – to reduce isolation and loneliness
- A friendly bench – a sensory garden space for people to sit and chat
- The BID offices have been converted into a community hub. The hub has become a play list help point where music is used as therapy
- Encouraging Purple Tuesday to create a calmer and more tranquil place for people to shop
- Partnering with Interpreter Live Signed Solutions so that people who require a British Sign Language interpreter can access one live through an App.

Using a BID approach has provided an alternative to the more traditional community development methods because it has been firmly rooted in community and businesses working together with businesses often taking the lead. Everything has started from a grass roots level. Much of the work has focused on bringing people into the town to encourage people to shop there and creating an inclusive place which is open to everyone.



05 Information about What's On

People are keen to have information online and via word of mouth

As part of this report, our community researchers asked people about whether they felt involved and about 69% said yes. We asked those who didn't feel involved the reason for this and the commonest reason was lack of information.

Reasons why some people don't feel involved in their community:



One interviewee suggested there could be “more people who would reach into the community such as outreach in mosques, churches, schools, and promote events that the community need.”

06 Trusted people

People who come from a community or have gained the trust of a community can have a big impact on inclusion

In all the case studies inclusion was driven by trusted individuals. In some cases, this was people from those communities themselves such as Kayleigh at Jasmine Road Community Gardens and Shamim at Direxions. Everything about Direxions grows from within the community it is seeking to include. Shamim, the founder, is a local Muslim woman who felt restricted in her childhood education by the cultural context at the time. She wants to help girls and women fulfil their potential and overcome their own barriers to enter education and employment. Shamim has first-hand knowledge of the issues which could be invisible to those who do not understand the nuances of her culture.

This is influencing her as she seeks to replicate her success with the Roma community. She knows she cannot be the person to lead this work, so she is working alongside a Roma woman. Their idea is to support women from within the Roma community with leadership skills and to channel their passion. They then become role models for other Roma women and girls. As always, Shamim's first approach will be to build understanding, friendship and clear shared goals and interests with and amongst those she works with.



Case study

Direxions (Shamim Akhtar)

Direxions was established by Shamim Akhtar and Keith Longstaff to support the inclusion of Muslim women in everyday life, education and employment. Their focus is to overcome the barriers that stop Asian women training and entering employment. The idea grew from Shamim's observation that, in her words, "Asian women and girls just weren't getting out and doing things". Shamim herself had developed community leadership skills and an ethos of helping the community from watching her father, who was a leader in the local Asian community. Traditional courses from higher education colleges do not fit with the needs and interests of some Asian women. Direxions partnered with the colleges to develop and provide accredited training courses such as sewing, English classes, learning to drive, employment skills. Crucially they train trainers from within the Asian community to deliver these courses. The work goes beyond training. They offer a helping hand wherever people need it to get into employment, for instance, going with people to interviews and providing references. They give people the chance to volunteer and build work experience.



Direxion's investment has a legacy in the community with many trainers going on to offer their training as a viable business beyond the walls of the college. There is also a generational shift with women who have trained via Direxions go on to be mothers who are much more open to their girls going to school and university. "I wanted to empower women and girls and I wanted them to have a better future"

Shamim says "In order for people to feel confident to even come onto a course, there were a lot of barriers: childcare, husbands not wanting them to mix and come out of the house,

girls who had families who wouldn't allow them or trying to get them married off. There were so many barriers to getting people involved. I wanted to help people and make it easier for them to access courses and training by bringing learning provision to them. Now they feel better about themselves and more integrated."

How are they inclusive and what's different about them?

Adjust your approach to meet the needs of service-users - Dirextions is designed to support the inclusion of Muslim women in everyday life, education and employment. But their approach is inclusive too and this is what makes them different.

Support the whole person in the context of their lives - Shamim understands the cultural and practical barriers Muslim women face when entering education and employment therefore she uses this knowledge to be sensitive to people's needs which could be invisible to those who do not understand the nuances of her culture. Dirextions works with trainees to overcome other barriers which might be around childcare, travel costs, family members discomfort with their attending classes. 'Being flippant isn't appropriate. Instead acknowledge and see that difficulty, by making allowances and adaptations'

Their advice on how to keep being inclusive

Get to really know the group of people – Seek to understand what they want and need. Be friendly and welcoming - Make sure people feel comfortable, "they've got to love you to come back"

Accessibility of venues – This is as a must.

Find out what others are doing - Ensure you are not duplicating efforts – who else is seeking to include this group, ask how we can combine our efforts

What is the essence of inclusion?

"Giving everybody the opportunity to be part of something."

In other case studies, people in key roles are from outside the community they are working with. They have worked hard to build trust. Liz Priest, a health visitor in Lye, and her team have had to immerse themselves in the Roma culture and put careful thought into how to adapt their work so it is seen as something that might be helpful to people. Building trust with them through personal contact has been a key element and they have physically walked the streets to find people and meet newcomers. They have a small group of staff including the interpreters who have been there consistently, doing what they say they will.

Case study

Health visiting in Lye (Liz Priest)

Liz is a health visitor based in Lye, an area of diversity and pioneering practice. When a population of Roma people arrived in Lye in 2017 Liz Priest, a health visitor, found that engaging with this community was very patchy. They were suspicious about her interfering. She often had difficulty knowing who to find as there were no formal records and people were often only there for a short time before they moved on. Liz and her team were very worried about the new babies; there was often no ante-natal care and even after chasing them, they often lost them again. And then a couple of babies died at 25 weeks, so the team agreed to try a different approach. Liz and her team have had to immerse themselves in the Roma culture and building trust with them through personal contact has been a key element of this; phone numbers and addresses have not worked so they have physically walked the streets to find people and meet newcomers. They have a small group of staff who have been there consistently, doing what they say they will do, and this also includes the interpreters.

How are they inclusive and what's different about them?

Consider the venue - The team carefully considered which spaces or venues the Roma people trusted in Lye. As a result, they teamed up with the midwife and started a clinic at a local GP surgery.

Address language barriers - The Black Country Partnership funded some interpreters and they carried out a leaflet drop and now the clinic is run as a drop-in.

Be mindful people may have other needs - The drop-in clinics can be very chaotic, and people are often supported in the waiting room. The team manage to see many of the ante-natal patients, and they will undertake as many of the health checks and immunisations they can, while they've got them physically at the clinic. Frequently, they have to be 'jack of all trades' as often people will come with problems and questions that are completely unrelated to their pregnancy, including school applications and hepatitis A vaccinations.

Build relationships with key influencers - The team often build relationships with key people such as matriarchal grandmothers, who had influence in the community, and it was word of mouth that eventually created the breakthrough.

Their advice on how to keep being inclusive

Building trust – Liz and her team had put careful thought into how to adapt their work so that it doesn't threaten the Roma people and is seen as something that might be helpful to them.

What is the essence of inclusion?

Adapt how you work to build trust and meet the needs of those diverse communities you are trying to reach.



STAGE 3: Workshop 1

In order to better understand the needs of our local people and communities, various workshops have been held with support from an array of agencies, across different settings, to capture the views of local people (across the life course).

Inclusion workshop with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) groups and carers of SEND children and young people.

In early 2019, our Public Health colleagues worked with Dudley Community Voluntary Sector (DCVS) to host a workshop for young people with SEND and carers of SEND to learn more about their views on inclusion. Public health colleagues and DCVS supported two of our community researchers (Angela Rea and Rachel Horne) to facilitate the workshop. It was important that any colleagues who attended removed any lanyards, and that all attendees irrespective of their role were encouraged to share their views and be listened to.

DCVS have strong links with our communities and work using creative, asset-based approaches to capture the thoughts and experiences of those involved.

To better understand what inclusion means the following questions were asked of our young people SEND group, and also the same questions of SEND carers:

- **What does it mean to feel included?**
- **What are the barriers to being included?**
- **How can we overcome these?**

The workshop generated much discussion and raised many important issues.

Special Educational Needs & Disability Workshops

From the key talking points from our **SEND young people** a number of themes emerged when discussing the **barriers** that they felt to being included from emotions such as embarrassment, anger, lack of trust, to feel unsupported by services/lack of signposting, feeling that they are not heard, to mental health issues, the use of jargon, finances, not feeling they like they belong/or able to cope in a mainstream school, and the number of unnecessary assessments (such as work/employment assessments) when some young people with additional needs are unable to work.

When discussing how they believed these **barriers could be overcome** the group felt that training should be offered to better equipped them with knowledge to understand the rights for those living with SEND, building more schools, more sharing of information and less silo-working, to having personal assistants whom they trust and will support them, to creating their own groups/opportunities to avoid reliance on local authority, using language they understand, and they felt that more trips, activities and more respite opportunities (which are person-centred) are all important for both them, and their parent/carers.

From the **parent/carers** point of view they felt that they needed to be more included in discussions that concern them and their child, to have knowledge of who can help, and where to go for that help, they wanted to be listened to, as they feel they have more knowledge about the needs of their child than that of service providers. They want to be supported to have respite, whilst interacting with other parent/carers of children/young people with SEND. They mentioned having appropriate adaptations for their child so they can participate equally, and in turn be able to access everything that is available to their peers, parent/carers also mentioned more activities and lack of funding. Lastly, they felt that inclusion in mainstream schools can work well but only if there is an inclusive ethos, and sufficient resources are supplied.

To **overcome these barriers**, parent/carers felt that they too need to be supported, as well as their child, they felt that information and places need to be accessible with more signposting, and the sharing of information to be available in easy to read formats. They felt they that reasonable adjustments should be implemented, and that professionals should focus on becoming more person-centred.

Lastly, when both groups were asked **how we measure progress and success for raising levels of inclusion**, it was felt that less work assessments for young people (who have severe disabilities and are unable to work) are carried out. More frequently conducted surveys and regular reporting to look at what is being done to encourage more inclusive practices. Whilst some felt more services were needed, others felt less reliance should be placed on services. Having more programmes and initiatives that are community, service-user and parent/carer led was listed as a good measure of progress and success.

They spoke of the importance of seeing that partners and agencies are working together and learning lessons from what is already working well. Lastly, what echoed through on a number of occasions as a key indicator of progress, is that SEND children/young people and their parent/carers are asked to be involved, and their opinions are actively being sought.



SEND Workshops (cont)

Below are key areas of inclusion that workshop attendees shared:

BARRIERS TO FEELING INCLUDED?

- Trust
- Not having the right support
- Language / jargon
- Communication barriers
- Prejudice and fear
- Lack of information
- Lack of self-worth

HOW TO OVERCOME BARRIERS TO FEELING INCLUDING?

- Get people to be involved in activities
- Use simple language
- Being proactive not reactive
- Intervening at the first step – not when things get worse
- Signposting
- Professionals to be more person-centred

Parent / carer

- Being included in discussions that concerns me
- Accessible information, equal opportunities, reasonable adjustments
- Getting support from appropriate services
- Being listened to - we have more knowledge than professionals about our children
- Ensuring inclusion is universal - not based on ability or disability
- Getting support from appropriate services

Young Persons Perspective

- Fair treatment
- Someone to help and guide
- Accessibility
- Being myself
- Having the correct adaptations for each person to be included
- To be able to be part of the community

HOW DO WE MEASURE PROGRESS/SUCCESS FOR RAISING LESSONS OF INCLUSION?

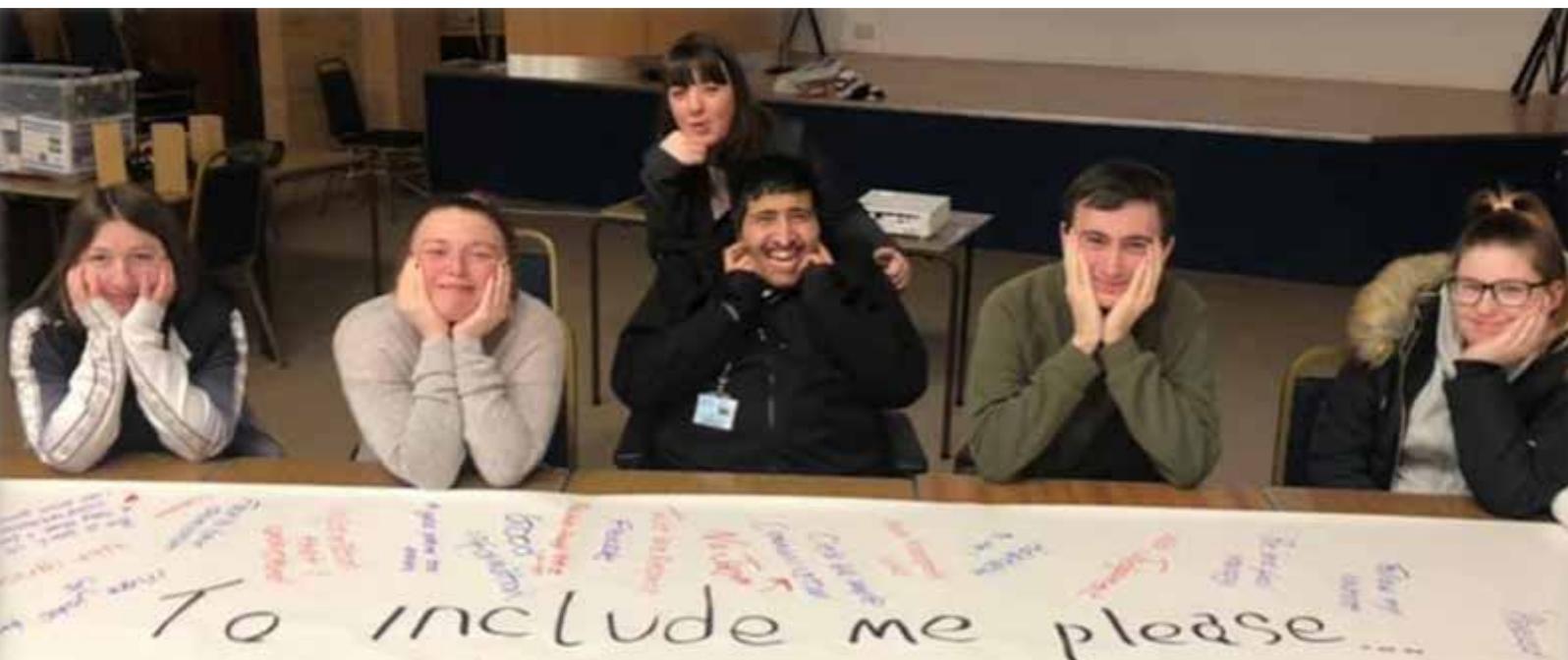
Parent / carer

- Agencies working together
- Parent/carer surveys for feedback
- Regular meetings to listen to parent/carers views
- Increase in number of children accessing clubs, groups with adequate support
- Gather opinions from service users

HOW DO WE MEASURE PROGRESS/SUCCESS FOR RAISING LEVELS OF 'INCLUSION'

Young Persons Perspective

- Talk to people – ask how they feel
- Seeing the results/outcomes from surveys
- Fewer children excluded from schools
- Monitor if services are being accessed and utilised fully
- More service-user and parent/carer led services



STAGE 3: Workshop 2

Inclusion workshop with some of our vibrant young adults with additional needs, disabilities or long-term health conditions

One of our key partners (DCVS) hosted a workshop early 2019 demonstrating a great example of working with and listening to young people through the Young Person's Inclusion Group. This group brings together young adults with additional needs, disabilities or long-term health conditions so they can find out information on matters that are important to them, give their opinions on services, have fun, design their own activities and make new friends. Here's what they think about inclusion.

What is inclusion?

Inclusion is about socialising, doing things and being together, it's about friendships and being a part of something. Inclusion is involvement, it's about everyone, and it's an interaction.

How I feel when I am not included:

When we don't feel included, we feel anxious, left out, alone, panicky, upset, out of routine, isolated, confused, and angry.

How I feel when I am included:

We feel listened to, outstanding, included, joyful, ecstatic, excitement, proud, happy and "Chuffed".

To ensure young people are included we need to:

Help us be a part of something in a way that we feel comfortable (don't ask direct questions), do not ignore me, make sure we can be fully involved, help us feel safe, have more face-to-face conversations, have information that I understand, listen to us, have a good place to meet, have fun! Help us feel welcomed and share food, have positive vibes, be flexible, grow trust and respect, don't use jargon, use clear and simple communication, have good transport links, take time to get to know people, provide reasonable adjustments. Do not judge us. Be encouraged to be and feel happy.



different ways of thinking about inclusion

In its broadest sense inclusion implies diversity in all areas of life and of society. Inclusion is a broad topic which engages with many discussions around health and social care. Research into public health frameworks that are relevant to this discussion indicate seven key approaches:

-  **Creating an environment for inclusive growth**
-  **Working with the determinants of health to shape inclusion**
-  **Targeting groups who experience discrimination**
-  **Using place-based approaches to increase inclusion**
-  **Working with institutions (e.g. schools) to improve inclusion**
-  **Increasing access to things which help people stay healthy**
-  **Influencing behaviour, change or inclusion by design**

What we are doing to support inclusion?

The Dudley Borough Vision 2030 sets out an aspiration for healthy, resilient, safe communities and connected, empowered people making things happen in their community. To achieve this vision Dudley Council and partners are developing a new relationship with communities based on greater collaboration and trust, and a focus on what communities can, and are doing for themselves, what we can do together, and what the council and partners need to do.

Although this report identifies some great examples of inclusion, it also identifies some gaps. We have detailed the things that have started to happen to address some of these issues.

BARRIER: Difficulty accessing and connecting to local, up-to-date information on available support, resources and community assets. Easy access to local, up-to-date information is important in growing connected, resilient communities. Previously, some of this information has been provided across a number of web platforms or local social media accounts, but there has been clear overlap between the different platforms and the potential for confusion for individuals trying to access this information. In addition, the format of these digital platforms has provided limited opportunities for communities to take ownership of the information shared, add real-time information about community assets, and use information to connect to people and opportunities in their local area.

A WAY FORWARD: With accessing and connecting to local, up-to-date information on available support, resources and community assets.

A new, inclusive single platform has been developed which is accessible on mobile devices, to ensure that local, up-to-date information is accessible to all Dudley residents, including those with protected characteristics. Development of the platform specification was based on engagement with children and young people aged 12-21 years old, those aged 50+, adults from BAME backgrounds, adults with a range of physical and sensory disabilities, elected members and Dudley Information Champions. The platform brings together three other current platforms (Dudley Community Information Directory, Family Information Service and Early Help, and the SEND Local Offer) into one single front door. It will be supported by 'Connected Conversations' training which will support people to have conversations which help people to understand their own skills and strengths and connect them to local community assets via the new website and App.

The new platform will also include real-time records of community assets and will therefore provide an invaluable resource to those working in the borough to support with decision-making, commissioning and service redesign. A campaign to launch the new platform has been planned and will go live as soon as Government restrictions around Covid-19 allow. Lastly, co-designing "hyper local"/neighbourhood approaches with communities is a key priority in the Dudley Covid Outbreak plan, as is utilising Covid Community Champions to reach out and share information in a whole range of formats.

BARRIER: TRANSPORT

A WAY FORWARD: Significant investment has been put into improving the transportation in Dudley. We are striving towards better connections with high quality and affordable transport, combining road, tram, rail, new cycling and walking infrastructure – offering a range of options for all.

BARRIER: LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

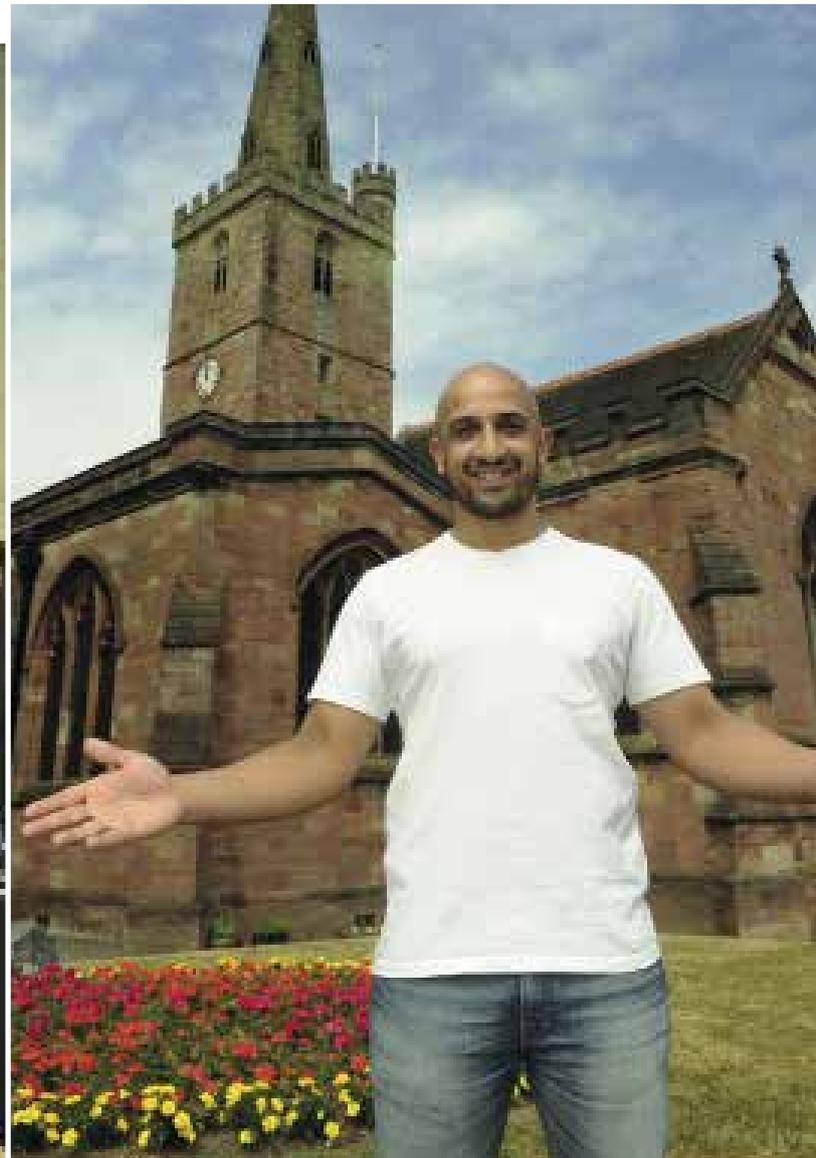
A WAY FORWARD: Despite age, or ability, we want Dudley to be a place where everybody has the education and skills they need. We have outstanding local schools, colleges and universities which have secured excellent results for their learners, and all Dudley schools and colleges are performing above the national standard so that all young people are able to reach their potential. We also have a dedicated Adult and Community Learning Team who can provide a host of support from; English, Maths and computer skills to arts, crafts and family learning <https://www.dudley.gov.uk/residents/learning-and-school/adult-and-community-learning/>

You can read more about how we are Forging a Future for All by visiting <https://www.dudleyboroughvision2030.org.uk/>



Working towards creating a Dudley for everyone

The findings and insights from this report have showcased all the wonderful, resilient and diverse communities which exist in our borough. This report is a testament to the wealth of strengths and assets Dudley has to offer in making it a place for everyone. I am in no doubt that there are many more untold stories of organisations, groups and communities who have worked hard to ensure that including people has been at the very heart of what they do – it is therefore our joint responsibility to further unlock this potential and continue to work together to create an inclusive community.



Recommendations

As Director of Public Health at the time of writing this report, I propose our next step is for all partners, agencies, organisations and stakeholders to work together in recognising this as both a call to action, and a commitment to what we need to do towards creating change in culture which prioritises inclusion. To continue building upon the current progress, we will need to engage, and work collaboratively, with all our partners and stakeholders to ensure we strive towards the common goal of inclusivity. In supporting this joint effort, I propose the following:

1. Partners in Dudley should take every opportunity to actively engage with and consult local people in shaping their services and programmes, both from the point of inception to delivery, to increase people's sense of autonomy and control.
2. Partners should actively work towards reducing loneliness and social isolation by creating opportunities for local people to participate in their communities, and work together.
3. Where necessary, a place-based approach should be adopted to target an entire community in order to address issues that are specific to those communities, within that ward. Encouraging networking and the creation of social capital.
4. Providers of services should recognise the importance of giving ownership to local people in finding local solutions, as they transition to the role of facilitators of services and events, rather than the deliverers.

ations

5. Find opportunities for cross organisational initiatives and identify each group's assets (and use and exchange these) to avoid duplicated efforts, and further build on the strong foundations for inclusion to create inclusive neighbourhoods which are shaped, if not led, by local people.
6. Develop and embed a system which focuses on sustaining the relationships, strategies and changes over time – thereby allowing us to recognise and champion any steps taken towards making Dudley inclusive for everyone.
7. Ensure that the physical environment and spaces from which services are provided are accessible and make people feel welcomed.
8. Continue to build inclusive settings (for example, workplaces and educational settings) and recognise, reward and celebrate these.
9. Finally, continue to capture stories and share case studies across all partners and future groups to demonstrate the importance of inclusion across the whole borough of Dudley.

Our community researchers



Shamim Akhtar



Rachel Horne



Samina Jan



Angela Rea



Jo Trewartha



Harjinder Kang

Summary

The essence of inclusion

I am pleased to leave you with some valuable insights on what inclusion means to those who strive to make Dudley a place where everyone is included.

"Giving everybody the opportunity to be part of something"

Shamim Akhtar - Direxions

"Consult and involve people in all you do"

Jo Leeman - Queens Cross Network

"People feel that they can belong"

Jayne Sargeant - Phase Trust

"We all need to be fully integrated"

Community research interviewee

"Developing an inclusive approach often takes a culture change which needs to be strongly led and modelled from the top"

Sarah Parkes - Acting Head Teacher, Wren's Nest

"It is a continual process of listening to the community, creating ideas and initiatives in collaboration with others, and trying things out to see how they feel"

Vicky Rodgers - Halesowen Business Improvement District

"Lots of events. Wonderful. Do lots of fantastic things for the community"

Community research interviewee

"Make sure you involve the people you are going to include"

Kayleigh Mills - Jasmine Road Community Gardens

