

Giving Something Back

Corporate Social
Responsibility
Strategy

November 2024



Foreword

As Wolverhampton's biggest social housing provider, we manage about 21,000 homes across the city. But we are more than just bricks and mortar, and we understand that helping to create thriving communities is a huge part of our role locally.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is about 'giving something back' to our communities across our city. We recognise the importance of playing our part in tackling the challenges our communities face, and work with our partners, contractors and supply chain to help create positive, sustainable change.

Through our partnership with the City of Wolverhampton Council (CWC), we will continue to support the great work that is happening city-wide and to fulfil our joint ambition to see Wulfrunians live longer, healthier lives. By creating employment and training opportunities for locals, we will support people to get on in life, enhancing financial wellbeing and supporting the customers who need us most.

This strategy sets out our approach to CSR and how we will measure our success. Our aim is to build on existing projects and to introduce new ideas that can take our work in the community to the next level.

Shaun Aldis, Chief Executive

Our mission:



Our vision:



Our company values:



Working together

because we achieve more that way



Open to new ideas

by trying new things



Respecting differences

by being fair and respectful



Delivering our promises

because customer service matters

What is Corporate Social Responsibility?

Corporate Social Responsibility, or CSR, is all about the impact an organisation and its suppliers can have on communities and wider society. We are committed to operating in an ethical and sustainable way and placing communities at the heart of what we do. There are four main strands within CSR for Wolverhampton Homes: community, customers, supply chain and workplace. This strategy sets out the areas we will focus on for each of these strands, to make sure we have a positive impact through the way we work and the partnerships we create. CSR can be measured using social value.



Community – this means we will support tenant and resident groups as a voice for customers across the city, creating a community grants fund to help local groups deliver projects that matter to them.



Supply chain – we will focus on retaining wealth in the city and delivering value locally as part of the Wolverhampton Pound initiative – partnering with local businesses and creating opportunities for local investment, including the creation of jobs and training.



Customers – with the customer voice at the heart of everything we do, we will increase digital inclusion, creating skills development and employment opportunities, and will continue to support our most vulnerable customers.



Workplace – our Wolverhampton Homes colleagues will be given volunteering days that they can use to give something back to communities in the city.

What is social value?

Social value measures the positive value a company such as Wolverhampton Homes creates in the community. This could be the benefit local activities or projects have on your wellbeing, good health or feelings about your neighbourhood. It might be the positive impact of more apprenticeships or job opportunities being created in your area, or volunteering time that is given to a community group that helps to improve a local resource such as an area of green space.

Social value can be created from volunteering, events, fundraisers, community projects, employment opportunities and more. They are the actions that a business takes to improve people's lives and to help create thriving communities.

As a social housing provider, all this work not only supports our customers and communities but also demonstrates that we provide great value for money.



How we will deliver social value



- Creating employment, learning and training opportunities within Wolverhampton Homes and through our supply chain.
 - Being part of the Wolverhampton Pound. Wherever possible, we will award contracts locally and we also encourage our supply chain to stay local, supporting the local economy and increasing the money that is spent in local businesses.
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- Supporting local groups, including charities, to develop healthy, safe and resilient communities.
 - Empowering customers to influence decisions and improve our services.
 - Giving our colleagues volunteering days to benefit community projects that positively impact our customers' lives.
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- Increasing digital inclusion, which has been shown to improve quality of life*.
- Support the City of Wolverhampton Council to deliver its vision through 'Our City: Our Plan'.
- Collaborate with communities and partners to find new ways of working and to respond to challenges.

* www.goodthingsfoundation.org/insights/building-a-digital-nation

Working together to create thriving communities



Within our communities – Supporting residents to deliver the projects and initiatives that matter to them, helping communities to thrive.



With customers – Listening and acting on feedback to bring customers together and create learning, employment and social opportunities.



With partners – Delivering value for money through local partnerships, creating opportunities for residents and investments across the city.



With WH colleagues – Contributing to local projects and initiatives through company volunteering and increased presence in local communities.

Working with communities

Positive change: The Back to Eden project, Heath Town

Wolverhampton-based Churches for Positive Change (C4PC) was keen to address health inequalities within the African-Caribbean community, which had emerged during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The group acquired land in Heath Town, with the aim of creating a community allotment. Organisers hoped the project would help to stimulate community spirit and improve people's overall wellbeing through creating opportunities for friendships, exercise and healthy eating.

The Heath Town estate is part way through a £120m transformation programme and the aims and objectives of the allotment project were closely aligned to our own goals for Heath Town – to provide an environment that supports people's health and wellbeing.

Our construction partner United Living agreed to support the project with the remaining funding, which completed the paving of the site, making it safe and accessible for everyone to enjoy.

This is just one example of how we will invest in projects, community groups and fundraising to support our partners across the city.

We will work with communities to empower them and support customers to get on in life through a range of opportunities for further development, learning and training. We will also provide opportunities to influence our decision-making and improve the services we provide.



The role of community development and engagement

Community development at Wolverhampton Homes has an important role to play, and regular engagement, consultations, surveys and learning all influenced this strategy. Our team spends time with our customers to ensure we understand their needs and preferences, enabling us to design and deliver services and activities that meet those requirements. The team also engages with local groups and community partners to support initiatives, activities and events that will benefit our customers and communities.

Engagement opportunities

We offer a range of engagement opportunities designed to ensure we are visible in the local community and that we are able to hear customers' voice, thoughts and opinions.

These range from groups created to reduce social isolation, such as friendship groups and tenant and resident associations, through to Let's Talk sessions, where we bring WH to you, in your community.

The Let's Talk sessions are a great opportunity for us to hear your customer voice on the things that matter to you. They also give us the opportunity to update you on all we are doing to create better homes and neighbourhoods.



Stronger Together

CWC, our shareholder, has developed a plan for the city, 'Our City: Our Plan', to help improve outcomes for local residents and we understand that WH has a vital role in supporting these objectives. Our agreement with the council underlines the importance of good quality, affordable housing, the breadth of our services and the range of people we support.

With increased regulation and to support CWC's approach to tenant-led scrutiny, we implemented a Customer Involvement Panel (CIP) to review all areas of our business. The panel is made up of tenants and it considers the different services WH offers, with the aim of identifying issues and suggesting improvements that benefit all customers. CIP members have access to specialist training and will develop new skills, knowledge and confidence that can boost employment prospects and social connections.

Our partnership approach ensures we can be stronger together and have a bigger impact on our communities.

Our Customer Contact and Access Needs consultation highlighted that half (49%) of respondents would like to be more involved in shaping the services we provide, with a similar number (43%) wanting to be involved in opportunities to benefit themselves and the community, such as volunteering and training.



Within our communities

What you can expect to see:

- An investment pot of funds from our strategic construction partners, which will be used for projects across the city, enhancing communities and neighbourhoods
- Links to our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy to increase work with diverse communities and groups
- Support of CWC to review and empower our tenants and residents' associations and help them thrive as a voice for communities across the city
- Provide more opportunities to meet customers through engagement, events and online
- Build a team of "community connectors" who will volunteer in our communities, listening and offering support to customers
- Ensure WH team visibility is maximised across the city and for our customers through our Community Development Officers, Tenant and Leasehold Officers and other frontline operatives



With customers

What you can expect to see:

- Bring customers together, strengthening their voice within our decision-making and creating a sense of community
- Further plans to work with customers to increase digital inclusion across the city, embracing new technologies. We launched our customer app, My Account, in November 2023 and continue to develop this for ease of use and benefit
- Continue to develop and expand our volunteering services to support our most vulnerable customers
- Promoting opportunities for employment, learning and training
- Continued development of our customer scrutiny group – Customer Involvement Panel – to ensure WH is accountable and drive improvements to our services
- Continued advice and support with the cost of living through our Money Smart team for those customers who need us most
- Increased satisfaction with services and a range of opportunities to provide feedback



With partners

What you can expect to see:

- Ensure that our procurement process has a focus on delivering value for money locally
- Embed social value within all procurement and contract management, ensuring consistency across all Wolverhampton Homes' contractors and sub-contractors
- Create new partnerships, providing opportunities for investment to be stronger together
- Continue to support local charities and good causes across the city, providing support through fundraising and volunteering
- Support the City of Wolverhampton Council in 'Our City: Our Plan'
- Build trusted partnerships to improve understanding of our communities and to identify where future investment should be directed



With WH colleagues

What you can expect to see:

- Colleagues contribute through the donation of more than 1200 volunteering days, giving back to our customers and communities through a range of local projects and initiatives
- Increased visibility of Wolverhampton Homes' colleagues within our communities
- Increased visibility of the Senior Management and Leadership teams in our communities to meet customers and support initiatives
- Wolverhampton Homes' teams being fully trained to deliver great services for our customers

We work closely with our strategic construction partners to identify and support local initiatives across our city. This collaboration aims to create positive impacts, supporting our customers to be proud of their neighbourhoods.



Knowing we are doing a good job

It has never been more important to deliver excellent CSR and community development. These commitments will run through all our work at Wolverhampton Homes.



2023 – 2024 highlights

We want to build on the good work that is already in progress and support more communities to thrive. Activities over the last financial year have generated social value for our customers and residents of the city.

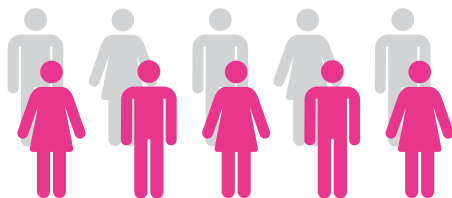
£227,000

helped 1562 vulnerable customers with the cost of living through the Household Support Fund



4875

customers supported by our Money Smart team

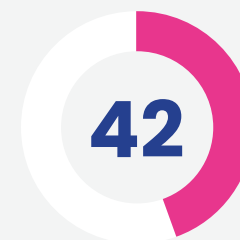


4800

befriending calls made to elderly and vulnerable residents



residents working with an employment coach



people supported into apprenticeships, work experience and training



volunteers upskilled through training



active customer groups

Focus on Gerald

Positive change: Telephone befriending

The telephone befriending service has been delivered by volunteers for Wolverhampton Homes since 2015. It became a lifeline for many during the pandemic, and saw a large increase in referrals.

At 97, Gerald Jones is our oldest volunteer. Gerald was previously a recipient of the befriending service and later asked to be trained as a volunteer, which he has now been doing for five years.

He volunteers for four hours each week and is one of our most popular callers as a result of his brilliant stories, local updates and obvious enjoyment of what he does.

In September 2021, Gerald was shortlisted for the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) Lifetime Achievement award.

The event was held online and we gathered all volunteers at Bantock House to enjoy a meal and watch the awards ceremony together, as a thank you from Wolverhampton Homes for their hard work and dedication to their community.

It was the first time many of the volunteers had seen each other in person since the start of the pandemic the previous year, so they had plenty to talk about and a great time was had by all.



Find out more about projects and initiatives across the city and sign up for news and information at
www.wolverhamptonhomes.org.uk/CSR



@wolveshomes

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