

# Worcester Community Trust

Bringing People Together

## 4-Year Strategic Plan

2021 - 2025

# Executive Summary

WCT is a local charity creating a big impact in Worcester. WCT manage six community hubs in the heart of neighbourhoods challenged by disadvantage and inequalities. We deliver a range of services that make a big difference to the daily lives of people in our communities. Our services aim to increase feelings of wellbeing, reduce loneliness and isolation, offer specialist support for survivors of domestic violence, support people into training, education and employment and work with people to deliver local services especially for young people, families and older people



We aim to deliver a diverse programme of services to ensure we are meeting the needs of and truly empowering people to make positive changes for themselves and their families.



WCT work in partnership with a range of stakeholders and this Plan has been developed in line with Worcester City Plan, Worcester Employment and Skills Strategy, Worcestershire Economic Recovery Plan, Worcester Community Recovery Plan and Worcestershire Local Industrial Strategy (Draft)



We strive to support strong and inclusive communities where everyone is able to contribute to a shared economic prosperity



# Our Vision, Mission, Social Objectives and Values

## Vision

Worcester: A City where people feel connected, supported and empowered.

## Mission

Bringing Communities Together by delivering services and activities for all

## Social Objectives

1. To provide social activities for children, young people families and for those in later life
2. To provide specialist services for individuals affected by domestic abuse
3. To provide quality training and support for local people seeking to enhance their skills
4. To offer professional support and activities to build good mental health and wellbeing

## Values & Behaviours

*We Collaborate* – Working together with local people and partners to achieve more

*We are Inclusive* – Access for all, welcoming diversity and valuing uniqueness

*We are Ambitious* – We value innovation and creativity, driving a progressive, dynamic and visionary organisation

*Delivering Excellence* – Investing in our staff, volunteers and infrastructure to provide quality and professional services

# The Social Need

Worcester Community Trust (WCT), established in 2010, operates six community hubs strategically located across the City of Worcester. WCT provides a wide range of youth and community services which help address issues such as lack of skills, social isolation, well-being, domestic violence and other social issues. They are located in:

Warndon – Warndon Hub	Tolladine – Tolly Hub	Brickfields – KGV Hub
Ronkswood – Ronkswood Hub	Dines Green – The Green	Midland Road – Horizon Hub

Worcester is mid-ranking on the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) nationally but has increasing pockets of deprivation with a growing number of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA's) in the worst 10% and limited social mobility. Overall, deprivation for the City is midranking (159/324, average of the ranks for all domains) but this masks polarisation and pockets of deprivation in areas of Cathedral, Warndon, St Johns, Rainbow and Gorse Hill wards. There has been an increase in pockets of deprivation from 2015-18 with 12.7% of all LSOAs in the worst 10% nationally. Income, education and living environment domains show greatest concentrations with an increase in crime and living environment deprivation. Worcester has been identified as a social mobility hotspot with notable deteriorations in health deprivation, disability, crime, income and education, skills and training.

Evidence suggests that there is a lower proportion of 16-17 year olds participating in full time education and training. The proportion who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) in Worcestershire sits below the national average of 5.5% at 4.9%, declining from 5.1% in 2018. Community Hubs have been identified as key assets in providing space for outreach delivery of vocational and non-vocational training providing effective links between the Community Hubs and Colleges to promote further learning. There has been an 8% decrease in the proportion of working age residents with qualifications at level four from 42 to 34%. The proportion of working age residents with no qualifications rising by 4% from 8% in 2016 to 12% in 2019, well above the County (7.3%) and National (7.9%) average.

Our Hubs act as nerve centres: We bring people together to help them deal with, and overcome, individual and shared problems and needs which they identify. We work with local people so that they can build on the resources they have and develop their confidence and skills to enable them to tackle the issues and make positive changes for themselves and their community. We also bring partners together to maximise the change made.

Our work supports the strategic plans of our partners including Worcester City Council, Worcestershire County Council, and The Healthy and Safer Worcester Partnerships. Our contribution to the Worcester City Plan is significant. We work with communities that are least connected, least safe, least resilient and where participation levels are low. We work with people in our communities to succeed including skills development, peer and volunteering support, providing safe places, community events and positive activities. We also contribute to improving the prosperity of local people by skills development and employment support.

# Impact of Covid-19

Recent research and evidence informs us that socioeconomic factors and genetic disposition coupled with lifestyle factors have exacerbated the effects of Covid-19.

## Young People

Research has shown that the educational attainment gap between children from disadvantaged backgrounds and wealthier backgrounds has increased, casting doubts on social mobility. Younger workers (those aged 18-24 years) experienced the largest decrease in employment and the largest increase in unemployment. The claimant count for young people aged 18-24 has seen an annual increase of 3.5% from September 2019 – September 2020. The pandemic has had an impact on children's holistic development and is likely to have an impact on their future educational achievement, especially for vulnerable learners.

## Income and Employment

Income is an important tenant and a risk factor to Coronavirus. Economic impacts will be significant and will disproportionately affect low-skilled workers and low-income households. There is an increased risk of the number of families suffering financial hardship or moving closer to unemployment as a consequence of Covid-19. Many of our services users felt digitally excluded throughout the lockdown period. Households with earnings over £40,000 per year are 47% more likely to have full digital skills. Over the three-month period between March 2020 and May 2020 the number of households on Universal Credit increased by 57% and number of households with child dependents on Universal Credit increased by 34%.

## Wellbeing and Targeted Support

A survey by the charity Mind found that almost a quarter of people who tried to access mental health services within a two week period in April 2020 had been unable to access help. Men, of working age and people living in more deprived areas are at higher risk of suicide. The impact of the pandemic, both economically and emotionally is a major concern for suicide prevention. A Healthwatch Worcestershire Survey found that 20% of respondents said that Covid-19 was having a great deal or a lot of impact on their mental health. Following a reduction at the start of lockdown, reported domestic abuse offences increased following the easing of restrictions however are now at levels anticipated. WCT has observed an increase in referrals and raised risk levels.

## Community Building

A high proportion of our service users and volunteers were required to shield during 2020, creating anxiety about returning back into our hubs to access support. There must be increased investment and co-ordination in our recovery plans to ensure those who are most impacted by the Covid-19 economic and health crises are not left behind. Our response to Covid-19 demonstrated the contribution that communities make to public health, and as a third sector organisation, we believe we are closer and better connected to our more marginalised groups allowing us to respond quickly. This sense of community is essential for health and well-being.

WCT will build on success and growth over the past 3 years, and work with our partners through targeted and strategic plans to deliver a place based solution with community delivery at the heart of the solution. Our priorities within this strategy consider the impacts of Covid-19 on our communities and we will work with our communities to build strong community infrastructure and supportive social networks to build community resilience.



# Strategy Impact Map (SIM)

## Activities

## Short-Term Outcomes

## Medium-Term Outcomes

## Long-Term Outcomes

### Service users :

#### Skills and Training

Open to all, develop confidence, build skills, support into job searching, training and employment

#### Wellbeing

Open to all, build social support, share skills, increase access to activities and support that reduce levels of loneliness and isolation and improve feelings of well-being

#### Targeted Support

Specialist group and 1-2-1 support, peer support and development of domestic abuse champions

#### Youth & Community

Children, Young People, Individuals and Families accessing positive activities and events co-designed with local people

### 1. Skills & Training

Remove barriers to accessing employment, training and skills  
Build self esteem and confidence

Upskill communities in both non and accredited training  
Supporting people into job searching

Increasing Social Mobility  
Retraining and opportunity for career change  
Increase % of people of working age with level 2

### 2. Wellbeing

Provide an opportunity for support & companionship  
Build self esteem  
Feel empowered to make decisions

Reducing stigma associated with loneliness and isolation  
Service users signposted to most appropriate support services available  
Provide safeguarding for our most vulnerable in the community

Creating increased feelings of belonging  
Reduce isolation, loneliness and mental health issues  
Peer Support Networks established to create long term support

### 3. Targeted Support

Provide 1-2-1 tailored specialist support  
Supported to identify risks in relationships

Able to recognise abusive tactics and how these are used against individuals

Prevent victims re-entering abusive cycles  
Leave abusive relationship long term  
Build coping mechanisms

### 4. Youth & Community

Encourage safe play and positive community activities in heart of communities  
Local people feel empowered to share their voice

Build knowledge of local area  
Build relationships with children at young age  
Support to reconnect with community

Develop network of volunteer champions to provide sustainability and increased social capacity  
Develop Community Hub associations to empower local people to influence service delivery and take ownership

### Vision

A City where everyone feels connected, supported and empowered

### Mission

To create strong, resilient, cohesive and supportive communities through the delivery of quality, co-produced services and activities



# Social Ambitions

## Ambition 1: By 2025, 955 local people per year will increase their skill level by accessing training and skills

Rationale: Evidence suggests that there is an increasing number of residents with no qualifications. Worcester City has also been identified as a 'social mobility cold spot' ranked 290/324.

## Ambition 2: By 2025, we will have 6 established WCT Hub Associations

Rationale: We have identified that people living in deprived wards of our City, feel less able to influence local services. We know that by engaging and empowering local people to shape service design and delivery, that they will have strong feelings of belonging and resilience. Local people will take the lead in designing services and activities for the community by implementing an Asset Based Community Development Model.

## Ambition 3: By 2025, we will sustain and enhance targeted support for 500 local people each year

Rationale: We have observed a continued increase in the demand for our specialist services and anticipate for this demand to continue to grow post Covid-19, particularly around well-being and domestic violence. The well-being of all our residents is likely to have been impacted following Covid-19.

# Strategic Organisational Priorities

## **Strategic Goal 1: Development of Training and Skills Arm**

We will expand our Training and Skills provision to increase the support, range and level of skills and qualifications local people can access from our hubs by 2025 with a focus on supporting young people

## **Strategic Goal 2: Devolved Power to Communities by establishing 6 Community Hub Associations**

We will establish a structure which empowers local communities to come together, shape services and lead on designing activities from their community hubs using the ABCD model

## **Strategic Goal 3: Sustain and Strengthen Service Delivery focused on Well-being and Domestic Abuse Support**

We will work with our partners to identify opportunities for growth, to sustain and strengthen the delivery of targeted, professional and quality services

## **Strategic Goal 4: Create a Sustainable Financial Model**

We will review the breakdown of total income and create sustainable income streams specifically reviewing our Fundraising Strategy, Marketing and Communications Plan and Lettings Income Policy. We will work with our partners to invest in our Community Hubs to reduce energy costs and control expenditure where possible

## **Strategic Goal 5: Implement Strong Organisational Development and Governance**

We will ensure that we have a robust and flexible organisation that can scale effectively, with improved governance processes, greater staff and volunteer development opportunities and a fit for purpose organisational structure including ongoing trustee development

## **Strategic Goal 6: Work with our Partners to Invest in our Assets**

We will work with Worcester City Council to re-purpose and re-model our existing Community Hubs to create more energy efficient and sustainable hubs offering flexible spaces for hire and service delivery which, will enable WCT to respond to the anticipated increase in demand for professional services post Covid-19