

**SOCIAL**

**VALUE**

**The Wrekin**  
Housing Group

Social value report  
for customers and communities

**2020/2021**



**MAKING A DIFFERENCE**  
**TO PEOPLE'S LIVES**

## WELCOME

Covid-19 has highlighted the critical role Wrekin plays in delivering services and emphasised the relationships we have with the communities in which we live and work.

The last year has undoubtedly brought with it some unprecedented challenges and hardship for many of our customers and communities. However, the pandemic has also brought significant successes for both Wrekin, our people and customers - many of which are outlined in this report.

In 2020/2021, our work generated just under £50m in social value. This is based, in part, on calculations and formulas created by HACT (Housing Associations' Charitable Trust) and the National Housing Federation.

We recognise we have a major impact on the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of our communities. This report provides an overview of the progress we're making at Wrekin to ensure we continue to improve opportunities for everyone.

### Wayne Gethings

Group Chief Executive



During 2020/2021  
we've created  
**SOCIAL VALUE**  
**WORTH**  
**£49.24m**

# EMPLOYMENT, SKILLS AND TRAINING

## CREATING EMPLOYMENT

## OPPORTUNITIES

During 2020/21 we provided employment to 66 people who were previously unemployed or not working.



27 ▶

**PEOPLE SUPPORTED**

on apprenticeship and trainee schemes

### Apprenticeships

We supported 27 people on apprenticeships and trainee schemes across The Wrekin Housing Group, with apprenticeships in Plastering; Plumbing; Electrician; Horticulture; Housing; Nursing; Business Admin and ICT.

Eight of our apprentices and trainees successfully completed their programmes during the year and were kept in our employment for an extended time to give them the best opportunity to secure permanent roles during the economic challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic.

## CASE STUDY

### **Charlotte, Business Administration Apprentice for Wrekin HR consultancy:**

*Taking on an apprenticeship course has helped me develop more confidence both personally and professionally and has given me a positive outlook for my future career. Taking part in the Business Admin course has motivated me to further my learning in the workplace, and get involved in further development opportunities.*



Building trainees Jayden and Owen took pride in meeting HRH The Princess Royal during her visit to the Wrekin owned redevelopment site at Princess Avenue in Arleston, Telford.



## EMPLOYMENT, SKILLS AND TRAINING



17 ▶  
**KICKSTART**  
placements

### Kickstart scheme

We welcomed 17 young people to Wrekin as part of Kickstart, a government supported programme providing paid work experience to young people aged up to 24 years on Universal Credit.

Our Kickstart programme is proving to be a great success with many more placements to be offered across The Wrekin Housing Group in 2021, ranging from catering to customer services; administration to repairs and maintenance; finance to marketing and communications; housing to care and support.

## **KICKSTART** **SCHEME**

## CASE STUDY

### Corey Evans and Liam Wood, Grounds Maintenance Trainees

“ Since being with Clean Cut I have enjoyed all aspects of work, especially working within a great team and developing new skills. Corey Evans

My anxiety and social skills have improved and I feel a lot more confident. I love the job and every day is a new challenge. Liam Wood ”



Kickstarter Ellie Hughes getting ready to serve home-made cottage pie to the residents at Withywood during her first month working on scheme in Shrewsbury.



## IMPROVING JOB SEEKING SKILLS

Wrekin is a partner in Shropshire's Building Better Opportunities programme, funded by The National Lottery Community Fund and The European Social Fund, supporting people towards employment, training and volunteering.



40 ▶

PEOPLE  
SUPPORTED  
towards employment

### Shropshire's Building Better Opportunities programme

During the year we supported more than 40 people towards employment, including help with completing job applications, improving CVs, upskilling through online training and interview coaching. Seven went on to secure employment.

## CASE STUDY

#### RP signed up to BBO during summer 2020



*A change in circumstance meant RP found himself unemployed, homeless and sofa-surfing. He became a Wrekin tenant and was referred to our employability support programme. We have been able to help RP get control of his finances and to start to think about his future.*

*Through our Digital Loan programme RP has borrowed a tablet from Wrekin, enabling him to job search and improve his digital skills, whilst supporting his daughter during lockdowns with home schooling.*

*RP's doctor recommended gentle exercise to improve both his physical and mental health and we were able to link him up with the Shropshire Cycle Hub to get donated, re-furbished bikes for both him and his daughter. We're continuing to support RP and he's feeling much more confident and positive about the future.*



## EMPLOYMENT, SKILLS AND TRAINING

### Cornerstone - the workforce of the future

In 2020 Wrekin was asked by the Local Enterprise Partnership and the Careers & Enterprise Company to become a Cornerstone Employer, supporting schools and colleges with their careers programmes for pupils and students. We've offered work experience, supported careers fairs and participated in many activities such as mock interviews over the years. Due to Covid-19 the offer had to change to being online.

Wrekin took part in the Shrewsbury Colleges Group Virtual Careers Live, offering young people information on the broad range of jobs and career opportunities across our housing and care operations and our back-office functions.



**781** ▶  
staff received  
**TRAINING**

### IMPROVING STAFF KNOWLEDGE AND SUPPORTING ONGOING EDUCATION

Wrekin is committed to investing in our staff and 2020/21 was no exception. 781 staff received training during the year.

All staff were signed up to compulsory online Health and Safety training and our care and support colleagues continued all mandatory learning and development requirements to enable them to deliver the very best services to our customers.



## FINANCIAL AND SOCIAL INCLUSION



£2.4m ▶

**ADDITIONAL INCOME**  
secured

### SUPPORTING FINANCIAL SECURITY

Our Money Matters team continues to support our customers facing financial difficulties, offering specialist benefits advice; tenancy support; energy efficiency and debt advice.

The team received 1,387 referrals during the year and secured an additional £2.4m in additional income for our customers.

From March 2020 Money Matters logged over 3,380 advice calls, resulting in over 1,800 positive outcomes for customers, including increased benefits, grant funding, food parcels and gas/electric vouchers.



£268k ▶

**DEBT CLEARED**

### PROVIDING DEBT ADVICE

95 households were referred for debt advice, of which 53 received in-depth debt advice resulting in debt reductions of more than £268K for tenants.

## CASE STUDY

*Miss A was referred to the Money Matters team due to high levels of rent arrears, and was at serious risk of losing her home. She presented with over £10,000 worth of debt – some of which had been going on for many years.*

*Wrekin Debt Advice helped her get a Discretionary Housing Payment from the council to help with rent arrears, and a reduction on her council tax.*

*Miss A was desperate to find work, and so we referred her to our Building Better Opportunities programme. She had always wanted to get into Care work but was finding it difficult to get an interview. Through 1:1 support we were able to encourage her to keep looking and not give up. We sent her job adverts and she decided to apply one last time. The very same day she was invited to a telephone interview and was successful, starting the following week. She couldn't believe it as she had almost given up!*

*Two months later she completed her care induction and is now doing a Foundation in Care Certificate and loving her job. When she completes the Foundation certificate she will start doing her NVQ in Health & Social Care.*

*Miss A has gained in self-confidence and is so much happier. She was really pleased with the support she received from Wrekin – she felt the staff didn't judge her but supported her and gave her the gentle push she needed.*



## FINANCIAL AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

### ADDRESSING LONELINESS

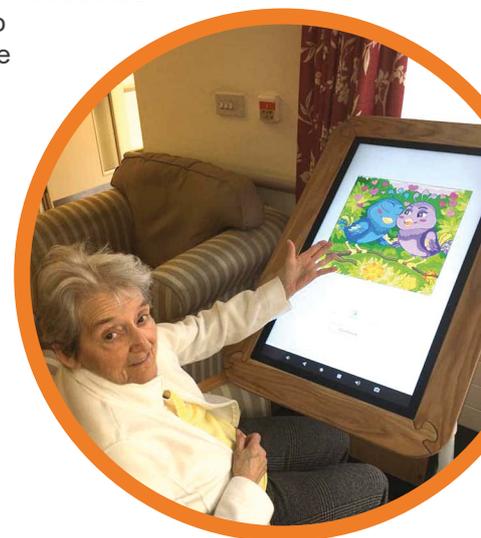
At Wrekin we have been looking at various ways to help and support our customers, including increasing access to digital devices, skills and confidence.

We supported our most vulnerable residents who were shielding to make sure they had access to everyday essentials. We assisted those eligible residents without access to IT to register for the Government Food Box scheme and supported others with placing online shopping orders.

#### Digital inclusion



We invested in digital devices to loan out to tenants who were part of our employability support programmes. We've also purchased some interactive tablets for our older residents at our ShireLiving schemes and our dementia care home in Stafford.



**448** ▶  
**PEOPLE  
SUPPORTED**

### PREVENTING

### HOMELESSNESS

448 people were supported with homelessness and housing issues by our Specialist Housing Services team.

Seven rough sleepers and 23 hidden homeless were supported into secure accommodation.

## CASE STUDY

*K (aged 47) was referred to us with complex health issues relating to her disabilities. She needed support to secure a suitable tenancy as she was being evicted from her current property which was in a poor state of repair. Unfortunately K's age meant she was too young to be accepted into most sheltered housing schemes.*

*As a wheelchair user, she needed a level access property with a wet room and somewhere that her cousin, her live in carer, and her dog could live too.*

*Our Specialist Supported Housing Services (SHS) team were able to step in and start to put things right. They liaised with her doctor to provide supporting evidence of her needs and amended her HomePoint account to reflect her correct circumstances. The team were also able to access funding to help her move when the new tenancy was secured.*



## CASE STUDY

*Following a divorce Mr J had gotten into financial difficulty. A run of bad luck with housing options meant he and his 16 year old son had had to move numerous times. Tragedy struck when a fire destroyed their belongings and left their property uninhabitable. The landlord decided to sell the property, forcing them into homelessness as they had nowhere else to go.*

*They moved to the Holiday Inn, with the insurance company initially covering the cost but when the insurance funds ended Mr J was given a weeks' notice to find somewhere to live. He immediately contacted the local authority, who provided him with emergency accommodation.*

*Confined within a single hotel room, including a period of self-isolation due to a school outbreak and working from home, led to a considerable deterioration in mental health and well-being.*

*After a month at the hotel, Wrekin were able to offer him a two bedroom house in Shrewsbury. Mr J felt total elation at the prospect of finally having a place to call home for him and his son. It was the new start they needed - somewhere they feel safe and a springboard to allow them to move on with their lives.*



## HEALTH AND WELLBEING



**3,221** ▶  
**WELFARE  
CALLS**

**SUPPORTING**

**VULNERABLE PEOPLE**



**176**  
**SHOPPING AND  
FOOD PARCELS**  
delivered

2020/21 proved to be an extremely difficult year for many. Mental health and wellbeing have been pushed to the limits as everyone tries to cope with the global pandemic.

Many of the things we might otherwise take for granted came to a grinding halt and people had to find new ways to survive during lockdowns.

Wrekin made welfare calls to more than 3,200 older and vulnerable residents, with 478 receiving regular befriending and welfare calls throughout the year.

## COMPLIMENT

**Raymond**

“ Since Covid and lockdown I have received a phone call from Sam every week. I cannot stress how much that phone call helped me through a difficult time. Now things have eased I still get a phone call every week from Sam who has become like someone I've known for a long time and as I live on my own I look forward to our conversations plus it's good to know that if I need help in anyway it's always there. ”



During the first lockdown our trades colleagues who were unable to do their usual jobs assisted with shopping and medication collections, as well as a food bank delivery service, with 176 shopping and food parcels delivered. We also assisted tenants needing essential household equipment, such as fridges, cookers and furniture.

Throughout the year, 80 staff came forward to undertake interim duties as part of the Happy to Help project.

Back office staff were asked to help out on the front line in our Extra Care Living schemes, with staff volunteers providing 719 hours of support in the Shires.

Colleagues in our ShireLiving schemes appreciated the support and those who gave their time got a great deal from it.





Spotlight on:

## SUSTAIN AND SHIP

Delivered by our Specialist Housing Services team, our SUSTAIN service provides intensive tenancy support for vulnerable work age clients, through a consortium approach in Shropshire. This includes securing housing and helping to gain grants and benefits for people who are homeless or facing homelessness.

Our SHIP contract in Shropshire enables us to provide accommodation and support for young care leavers who are not in employment, education or training.

It has been a very challenging 18 months for this particularly vulnerable cohort of clients where the loss of important safety nets is especially felt. The family support that most take for granted is not there, so it has been especially important that our Specialist Housing Services support has been in place.

With lockdown easing, we worked with Leaving Care Teams to help address the backlog of care leavers needing to move on from their accommodation at 18. Three new residents have been accepted into the scheme.

One young man is preparing to leave the SHIP, bidding on properties as he has proved that he is more than capable of living independently. Over the coming months we hope to have completed a supported move with him into a tenancy of his own and to then gradually step back to allow him to flourish.

**292**

**OUTCOMES ACHIEVED**  
by SUSTAIN and SHIP



## HEALTH AND WELLBEING



793

tenants  
supported to

**REMAIN  
INDEPENDENT**

### EXTENDING INDEPENDENT LIVING AND REDUCING SOCIAL CARE NEEDS

99.8% of tenants in Wrekin's retirement living accommodation continued to live independently.

We installed 127 pieces of equipment on behalf of Telford and Wrekin Council, saving 780.5 hours of Occupational Therapists time.

The Support and Enablement Service had an overall **SROI of £19.66 for every £1 spent.**

## CASE STUDY

*Mrs N, who had been diagnosed with dementia, wished to remain in her own home. However, her family were concerned about her future safety, especially at night since she lived alone.*

*Wrekin supported Mrs N and her family to install door contact sensors and provided Mrs N with a GPS watch. We assisted them to gain access to the Carers Contact Centre and the Alzheimer's Society to ensure that they had wrap-around support.*

*Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, our Support Service and Retirement Living Co-ordinator had daily contact with Mrs N over the phone. Regular door step visits were also carried out to ensure that she remained safe and well. These interventions helped Mrs N to retain her independence by remaining at home, and gave her family the peace of mind that she was safe.*



## HEALTH AND WELLBEING

### IMPROVING WELLBEING

#### Healthy eating

Maintaining a well balanced diet helps your body protect against many diseases such as heart disease, diabetes and cancer.

Within our ShireLiving schemes, our qualified chefs carefully planned menus to accommodate residents likes and dislikes, ensuring a good balance of meat, poultry and fish along with fresh, seasonal, locally sourced vegetables. The menus were made prominent on the 'Daily Specials' board, to ensure residents benefited from vitamins and nutrients. The menus also aimed to reduce salt, sugar, saturated fats and the use of processed foods in our cooking techniques.

## COMPLIMENT

#### ShireLiving resident

*I would like to compliment the kitchen staff at Maywood.*

*They have all been marvellous, especially during the recent difficult months. They have all been pleasant, caring and helpful whilst coping with the restrictions of Covid-19 and observing the safety guidelines.*

*As for the meals – well, I don't think I have had meals of such excellence in any establishment for years. Perfection is the word that comes to mind, as does incomparable. I have researched the Thesaurus, and find that so many words are applicable to the quality of the meals – succulent, delectable, scrumptious, remarkable and unrivalled! As with Cordon Bleu, worthy of distinction.*

*The menu, cooking ability, presentation and service are superb. It is really an excellent team that we have here – they excel themselves. It must be a talent they all have to work so well together. I hope that we have the pleasure of their skills for many years to come.*

*I must not forget all of the other members of Maywood staff. During this difficult time, they have ensured that we are all safe, well and happy. I cannot praise the teams here highly enough.*



# SAFER AND MORE RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

## FOSTERING A SENSE OF COMMUNITY

 **£16,000** ▶  
**COMMUNITY  
FUND GRANTS**  
awarded

### Community fund

In 2020/21 we supported 12 groups through our Community Fund. Many community activities were put on hold during the pandemic but we updated the criteria for our grants to be able to support applicants seeking help with Covid safe procedures and PPE.

£16,000 worth of grants were awarded for projects, including:

- Haybridge Hall gardening project
- Hall Barn garden makeover
- Great Dawley Town Council community room
- Hope House PPE
- The Wakes laptops and secure storage
- Wem Christmas lights
- Working Together Ludlow Covid secure space for adults with learning disabilities
- Edgmond Wildlife strimmer, binoculars and wildlife ID guides
- Hallcroft retirement living scheme garden project
- Telford Hockey Club ladies team kit
- Bridgnorth litter pickers equipment

### Haybridge Hall gardening project

Working in partnership with West Mercia Police Cadets we were able to complete a gardening project at Haybridge Hall in Telford.

We worked closely with developers, Novis Building Solutions, to create the Haybridge Peaceful Garden.

The garden is in the middle of the scheme so that all the tenants from the existing bungalows, the new bungalows and the brand new Haybridge Hall can see it and come together to enjoy some outdoor time in a safe environment.

We were also able to add some lovely pots for the patio at Haybridge Hall for the tenants to enjoy.



## Hall Barn garden makeover

Hall Barn, Telford, benefited from a garden makeover thanks to the help of West Mercia Police Cadets, Travis Perkins, Telford & Wrekin Council, Madeley Town Council and our Community Fund.

Some of Wrekin's trade apprentices built a pergola structure. The Cadets joined us in putting up solar lights, planting the pots with climbers and bedding plants and creating a seating area.

Men in Sheds built a bird table, bird houses and an insect hotel to encourage wildlife and renovated a picnic bench donated by Reviive. We planted bee and butterfly friendly plants and the tenants are delighted with the results. For anyone wary of going too far during the pandemic it has proved to be a great asset to enjoy, to get outside and not feel so isolated.



## ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

### BUILDING AND PROVIDING

### EFFICIENT HOMES



79 ▶

homes with  
**GREEN ENERGY  
SYSTEMS**

### Solar panels and battery storage

Wrekin carried out work to bring some of our older properties up-to-standard. We have partnered with Telford based AceOn Group on a scheme backed by Government money to install green energy systems into existing homes and new builds. It means that 68 homes can be retrofitted with battery storage and solar panels and 11 brand new energy-efficient homes can be constructed.

### Passivhaus technology

We're investing in high quality, energy efficient and affordable new homes across Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin and Staffordshire.

Our forward thinking approach means that we actively trial and explore new ways to build our homes including new modular and Passivhaus construction methods.

We have delivered four new energy-efficient family homes at Princess Avenue in Arleston, Telford. They have all been built to the Passivhaus standard - advanced, low energy, draft-free buildings featuring high performance insulation to effectively eliminate heat loss. This has resulted in lower energy costs for our tenants.

Their construction was linked to the Marches Construction Ready Partnership. The partnership, which involves Wrekin, Landau Ltd, a training provider, Telford College, and Beattie Passive, received a £650,000 government grant to set up a training hub aimed at providing opportunities for people to get in to the construction industry, while tackling Shropshire's housing shortage.



## SOCIAL VALUE OUTCOMES

	Social Impact £	No of outcomes
<b>EMPLOYMENT SKILLS &amp; TRAINING</b>	<b>£1,950,949.36</b>	<b>1,592</b>
Creating employment opportunities	£250,360.56	85
Improving job seeking skills	£31,578.53	44
Improving staff knowledge	£1,279,758.90	1,411
Stimulating local employment	£3,821.12	4
Supporting ongoing education	£385,430.26	1
<b>FINANCIAL &amp; SOCIAL INCLUSION</b>	<b>£8,056,742.15</b>	<b>3,983</b>
Supporting financial security	£2,396,254.74	1,593
Addressing loneliness	£3,902,910.41	1,942
Preventing homelessness	£1,757,577.00	448
<b>HEALTH &amp; WELLBEING</b>	<b>£36,927,385.43</b>	<b>12,369</b>
Supporting vulnerable people	-	2,146
Extending independent living	£3,837,558.25	3,268
Reducing social care needs	£27,127,472.32	3,741
Preventing falls and hospital attendance	£1,081,440.50	3,741
Improving wellbeing	£4,888,914.36	2,235
<b>SAFER &amp; MORE RESILIENT COMMUNITIES</b>	<b>£1,317,781.05</b>	<b>2,409</b>
Fostering a sense of community	£246,699.61	137
Providing safe environments	£1,071,081.44	2,272
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY</b>	<b>£991,340.00</b>	<b>12,941</b>
Building and providing efficient homes	£991,340.00	12,941

The Wrekin Housing Group has a turnover of **£95.7m**. Using the National Housing Federation Economic Calculator this investment contributes towards **1,771** full time equivalent jobs and employee income of **£55.2m** across the UK.

From a total Wrekin Housing Group spend of **£84.5m** in 2020/2021, **£56.9m** is spent locally. Tracking three circulations of this money in the local economy creates over **£96.56m** of spending locally.

In 2020/21 The Wrekin Housing Group took the keys to **277 new homes**, investing **£37.3m** in new developments. A further 366 homes have been started.

Contractually we request that for every £1m of build contract our contractors employ at least one apprentice or trainee position. Using the NHF Economic Calculator our investment in new housing stock in 2020/21 should have generated 640 jobs including 37 apprentices and over £89m to the wider economy.