

SOCIAL VALUE STRATEGY

2021-2025

The Wrekin
Housing Group

September 2021



1. Introduction

The Wrekin Housing Group is a socially minded organisation that prides itself on making a positive difference to people's lives.

Social Value is a key priority within the Corporate Plan and our journey to 2025. We aim to maximise the social value of our services, for the benefit of our customers and the communities we serve.

The Social Value Strategy is one of a suite of underpinning strategies that have been refreshed and aligned with the Corporate Plan, its objectives and targets. This strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that it remains relevant, reflects the current strategic direction, can respond to local challenges and is aligned with other Group activities.

In developing and delivering this strategy we are demonstrating our commitment to embedding social value across the organisation, making it intrinsic to all we do.

For us social value is how we improve opportunities for all: for our customers, service users, employees and communities, whilst taking into account the wider economic, social and environmental impact of our actions.

By focussing our resources on addressing some of the challenges our customers face, such as social, financial and digital exclusion, unemployment, low skills, loneliness, health inequalities, we can work together with partners, local people and stakeholders to create opportunities for people to reach their full potential, build community and individual resilience and offer places where people want to live and work.

Equality and parity of opportunity is important to us and we will work hard to ensure our policies and procedures do not discriminate.

Our focus will be on people living in our properties and communities with a high proportion of our homes, targeting our work where we can make a long term difference.

Our social value work will align closely with our customer engagement and involvement. Our Social Value Champions will act as advocates, encouraging and supporting all staff to maximise the social impact of their actions, recognising that everyone matters and inspiring positive change.

By listening to our tenants and residents we can better understand how we might enable them to improve life chances; create strong, vibrant, resilient communities; achieve tenancy sustainment; remain independent in their homes; or receive the most appropriate high quality care and support.



2. Social Value Priorities

This strategy identifies five priority themes that will shape and focus our social value activity over the next 4 years.

These priorities build on the previous Social Investment Strategy, our Corporate Social Responsibility commitments and on our experience of, and response to, the Coronavirus pandemic in 2020/21. Covid-19 led us to learn more about our customers, our role in their lives and how we could make a difference during exceptionally challenging times.

The priority themes are broad enough to be flexible and responsive and will influence our social investment decisions - the money, time, skills and expertise we invest in supporting our customers, staff and communities.

Our social value priorities for 2021-2025 are:

 **Employability**  **Inclusion**  **Resilience**  **Wellbeing**  **Environment**

There are clear synergies between our social value priorities and our organisational vision and values:

Making a difference to people's lives



- ❖ **Inspire positive change**
- ❖ **Everyone matters**
- ❖ **Communicate clearly**
- ❖ **Grow Together**

An associated Delivery Plan will accompany the strategy and will be refreshed annually. The plan will include key milestones and timescales, target outcomes, financial and non-financial resources and links to other strategies.

3. Employability

We will create jobs and promote economic growth in our locality. We will support our tenants, employees and local people to develop skills, build confidence and access jobs and training and utilise social value activity to underpin our own workforce planning.



We will do this by:

-  Establishing a Skills Academy to deliver skills and training opportunities for staff, customers and tenants
-  Removing barriers to work and offering pre-employment support through our Building Better Opportunities programme
-  Creating apprenticeships and training programmes, targeting our tenants and customers
-  Delivering quality work placements through our Kickstart programme and supporting volunteer work placements and work experience
-  Working with schools and colleges to fulfil our obligations as a Cornerstone Employer
-  Utilising our ethical procurement framework, investing in the local supply chain and encouraging economic growth
-  Providing employment opportunities for local people and seeking to ensure our workforce reflects the communities we serve

4. Inclusion

We will work with our tenants, customers and employees to improve financial, social and digital inclusion. We will provide access to support and advice to enable people to gain, maintain and sustain their tenancies, maximise their income potential, feel connected and more able to play an active role in society.

We will do this by:

-  Delivering money management, budgeting and debt advice
-  Providing welfare and benefits advice to help residents secure their entitlements

- 🏠 Helping local people and residents to secure and sustain their tenancies
- 🏠 Developing and implementing our Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion strategy, seeking to improve parity of opportunity and ensuring our workforce and governance is representative and reflective of the communities we serve
- 🏠 Offering opportunities to customers to digitally upskill, train and improve their connectivity and working in partnership to provide access to affordable digital solutions
- 🏠 Supporting affordable warmth and reducing fuel poverty
- 🏠 Providing access to low cost furniture and essential household equipment

5. Resilience

We will seek to build individual and community resilience, working in partnership with others to ensure our communities are safe and vibrant places to live.

We will do this by:

- 🏠 Listening to our tenants and customers and developing community pledges across our areas of operation
- 🏠 Supporting initiatives to address anti social behaviour, reduce crime and integrate secure by design principles in to our developments
- 🏠 Regularly reviewing our policies and training our staff to recognise the signs of domestic abuse or safeguarding concerns. Meeting our obligations and commitments under the Make a Stand pledge to support people experiencing Domestic Abuse
- 🏠 Celebrating community participation and volunteering, supporting and encouraging community activity and the voluntary sector through the Community Fund

6. Wellbeing

We will support our customers, local people and employees to live happy, healthy and independent lives.

We will do this by:

- 🏠 Helping people to live independently and providing care and support to those with specific needs
- 🏠 Reducing loneliness and social isolation
- 🏠 Increasing awareness and access to healthy eating
- 🏠 Implementing our staff engagement programme and creating community based volunteering initiatives for staff that benefit local people
- 🏠 Encouraging positive wellbeing and access to mental health and mindfulness resources
- 🏠 Working with partners to increase access to recreational, sport and leisure activities



7. Environment

We will aim to minimise our impact on the environment and encourage our customers and staff to be mindful of the importance of environmental sustainability and the threat of climate change.

We will do this by:

- 🏠 Encouraging a Reduce, Reuse, Recycle philosophy across the organisation
- 🏠 Completing and delivering our Carbon Zero Strategy
- 🏠 Fulfilling our role as a business champion in Telford & Wrekin's Plastic Free Taskforce
- 🏠 Supporting our communities in locally led environmental improvement initiatives
- 🏠 Investigating the feasibility and roll out of Passivhaus developments on small plots, linked to our training and apprenticeship opportunities
- 🏠 Undertaking the Sustainability Reporting Standard for Social Housing ESG (environmental; social; governance) self assessment to identify areas for improvement



8. Measuring Success

We want our social value work and social investment to benefit our tenants, staff and customers and to help build resilient, safe and vibrant communities.

Our social value strategy will achieve:

- 🏠 Business benefits
- 🏠 Residents and community benefits
- 🏠 Wider social benefits
- 🏠 Value for money benefits









We will achieve and measure our success by:

- 🏠 Listening to our residents
- 🏠 Partnership working and collaborating with others
- 🏠 Exploring innovative solutions, sharing best practice and learning from others
- 🏠 Reviewing our progress and evaluating our impact
- 🏠 Capturing and monitoring activity through our Social Impact Champions
- 🏠 Producing our annual Social Value Report



9. Outcomes

During 2021 we will review the data we capture and the outcomes we measure to better reflect the difference we are making to people's lives. Our current outcomes include:

-  To generate through the provision of our core activities, £50M social value per annum
-  To provide training and apprenticeship opportunities to 100 local people by 2025
-  To support 180 local people into employment or training through our employability programmes by 2025
-  To support up to 600 pre-tenancy assessments per annum
-  To support up to 1200 referrals to Money Matters and Debt Advice per annum
-  To secure £3M+ in additional income and benefits for tenants per annum
-  To enable 3000 per annum to live independently
-  To award £50k per annum to community led activity in line with our social value priorities













10. Strategic and Partnership Links

As a socially minded organisation we provide housing and care services, and generate social value for customers across Telford & Wrekin, Shropshire and Staffordshire.

Through our Social Value Strategy we will build stronger partnerships with other like minded organisations, joining together through shared Corporate Social Responsibility, objectives and commitment to positive impact and place shaping, for the benefit of our customers.

The deliverability within this strategy is closely linked to the:

-  Group Corporate Plan
-  Customer Strategy
-  Procurement Strategy
-  Technology Strategy
-  Development Strategy
-  Asset Management Strategy
-  People Strategy
-  Care & Support Strategy
-  Equalities, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy
-  Zero Carbon Strategy
-  Housing Strategy