



Warrington Housing Association

Social Value Report 2025

As we celebrate our 50th year, our commitment to our local community is as strong as it has ever been.

Creating social value is central to our vision for making Warrington a great place to live. Our social value investment is focussed on tackling inequalities and promoting fairness in society, supporting communities, living independently and individuals through our quality services. The focus of our social value work is:



Health and Wellbeing through our Lifetime service



Skills and Employment



Financial wellbeing



Our Neighbourhoods through our WHIA service and the Gateway

The social issues our community is experiencing include the cost of living crisis since 2021 and we know that poverty is a major factor that affects health outcomes. We invest for stronger neighbourhoods so that people can enjoy a healthy life, feeling connected within their communities.

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Foreword

As a community-based housing association we are driven by our social purpose and we believe that everyone should be able to live in a decent quality home that is affordable for them.

But we want to go further and maximise the impact we make in our community. We are committed to helping our communities thrive. Warrington is a great place to live and Warrington Housing Association is a truly local, independent organisation with a long history of providing local solutions to local issues.



Michele Scattergood

Chair of Warrington Housing Association Board

Social Value is at the forefront of our services, from my board colleagues right down to the teams delivering front line services and we have committed to dedicating a percentage of our surplus to these activities.

In this report we reflect on the last two years of activities to celebrate the social impact we have had, and to plan even more for the future of our organisation and the people at the heart of our communities.

Highlights include 25,000 Lifetime activities, home adaptations for 2000 clients and a dedicated team of 50 volunteers.

We would like to thank everyone on the team, our volunteers, partners and communities.

We are proud of the difference we make together.



Years of Social Value



1975

Guildford Close

30 apartments completed on Guildford Close.



1995

Quays Community Centre

A new centre located in our estates with a range of activities being offered.



2003

Purpose built homes

5 purpose built bungalows developed on Newborough Close. Designed for those with specific needs.



2007

Warrington Home Improvement Agency

A new service dedicated to supporting older & disabled home owners maintain & improve their homes.



2009

Mortgage Rescue

A scheme to save 57 homeowners who are at risk of their homes being reposessed.



1993

St Benedict's Close

28 new homes on St Benedict's Close. A mix of houses and apartments.



2003

Support for vulnerable tenants

WHA develops a support service, aimed to help sustain tenancies and homes.



2003

The Gateway

An award winning hub for 25+ voluntary & community sector agencies, delivering services to Warrington.



2008

Apprenticeship Programme

WHA commits to apprenticeships for local young people across the business.



2010

Fairfield Community Hub

A former school developed into a community space. Offering a cafe, art spaces and community spaces.



Years of Social Value



2013

Lifetime Community Hub

Award winning hub for later life, a wide range of services to keep active and connected. Over 20,000 attendances each year.



2020

COVID-19 Pandemic

In response to Covid restrictions, communities came together with a stronger focus on mutual support and care.



2021

161 New Homes for Market Rent

High quality eco-friendly homes for market rent across Great Sankey & Birchwood.



2024

The Gateway turns 20

Celebrating 20 years of service, marking two decades of community impact and achievement.



2014

Affordable New Homes

On the 40th anniversary, WHA acquired 4 fantastic new homes for families in Culceth.



2021

Living Wage Employer

We're to be recognised as a Living Wage Employer, reaffirming its commitment to fair pay and social responsibility.



2022

Edgewood Court Opens

30 affordable homes, offering high-quality, accessible housing tailored to meet the needs of older residents.



2025

WHA turns 50

WHA celebrates 50 years of making Warrington a great place to live.

Health and Wellbeing

We support people in later life to enjoy a healthy, independent and fulfilling life, feeling connected within their communities, reducing loneliness and isolation and improving health and wellbeing.

Lifetime

Lifetime is a hub providing a support network and opportunities for older people to be active, keep learning and volunteer. Lifetime reached the landmark of ten years since the doors to the centre opened in August 2023.



We have learnt about the impact of being involved in Lifetime from our members and some key points that emerge are:



84% feel it has helped them look after their health.



96% feel it has improved their wellbeing.



74% of members said it has helped them to cope with changes in their personal life like bereavement, retirement or illness.

Since then, Lifetime has inspired:

In 2024/25 Lifetime has achieved

- 25,000 attendances
- 3000 activities
- 578 individuals taking part each month
- 102 digital inclusion sessions one to one

Lifetime achievements

- Number of visits from members
- Over 600 people take part at least once a month in Lifetime activities
- activities from art and craft to Zumba
- Over 50 members regularly attend peer support groups for health related conditions

Promoting inclusion is important and Lifetime is responding to the needs of our community by:

- Free activities every day
- Peer support for people with health issues including for those with hearing loss, stroke, living with dementia
- Free activities to connect with others and support wellbeing including Soup and a Chat.



Lifetime has collaborated with other agencies which contributes to our social value mission. Agencies running activities:

- The Reader Charity – running shared reading group, fortnightly session
- Soup and Chat – Speak up, Get Warrington Talking run for free
- Warrington Disability Partnership – running Energy Advice Sessions (no longer funded)
- Stroke Association – Moving on Stroke Group
- Veterans Breakfast Club – Weekly group, run in the Cafe
- Puzzle and Trivia – now run by local CIC, Activity Angels
- Birchwood Youth and Community Centre – joint activities



Funding has been successfully secured in the last year to our activity programme:

£12,500 Re-connect project from the UKSPF UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

- £600 Transgender Group
- £1500 Bereavement Support Group
- £880 Art for Well-being – 6 sessions funded by Cheshire and Merseyside Cancer Alliance
- £570 Cancer Alliance Funding – Pilates – Body Awareness
- £250 – Food Demonstration – Vegetarian for Life
- £400 – Cancer Screening Engagement with Members

Lifetime has a new home in the main Gateway resource centre, enhancing connections with partners in the Gateway. The community café has been brought back to the heart of the Gateway and is now home to Lifetime members as well as the wider Gateway community.

The café is now host to additional community events including cooking lessons for people who are homeless, veterans' group and a Soup and Chat session in support of mental health.

This year we asked members about their concerns:

- 50% said it is the cost of living.
- 10% are very concerned about their financial future.
- 48% are worried about their health.
- 22% are worried about loneliness.



The café has been brightened up with a new mural which was commissioned from a local artist which reflects the local park, bringing the outside in. This led to a series of workshops on the theme of health and well-being through expressing your feelings through art.

The Choir is a powerful example of singing as a great ice-breaker, it's a great way of forming friendships. As the choir stand together and sing together it brings people closer, friendships blossom.

As one of our members said: *"joining together with people similar to you, who share the same interest, musical taste and sense of humour. It's the highlight of my week."*

The Choir have branched out to performances at events and care homes.

"I have made lots of new friends by joining the choir and coming to various activities."

"Lifetime choir is joyous. For me it has achieve a lifetime ambition having been rejected by a choir as a young child, it is welcoming and encouraging and is the highlight of my week."

"My wife was suffering with advanced Alzheimer's but she always looked forward to Lifetime Choir. She couldn't hold the music sheets, but she remembered almost every word of every song and sang with a big smile on her face. It was the high point of her week."

"Lifetime choir helps with friendships when you are grieving and live alone. Singing makes you feel better; I enjoy it so much."



Re-connect Project

Lifetime launched a project to tackle loneliness and isolation, reaching out to people who are not connected after successfully securing funding from UK Shared Prosperity Fund. People may have stopped connecting with Lifetime for several reasons such as significant life events, bereavement, illness or caring responsibilities. The Re-connect Project will reach out and support people with the end goal of getting back to joining in LifeTime activities.

One client who has been suffering from cancer said that she now wants to work with Lifetime to set up a support group for people who are going through the same journey

A member who had stopped coming out after COVID said "I am looking forward to getting back to the games morning, I just couldn't get out of the house, so thank you for helping give me that boost."



The project works with a team of volunteers to support by making phone calls to connect with people, and a team of volunteers to support in the initial steps of introducing a new or previous LifeTime member to some groups.

Financial Inclusion

We promote fairness in society through addressing financial wellbeing. Poverty is a major factor that affects health outcomes and we aim to improve the financial situation for the lowest income households and improve resilience and wellbeing.

Supporting Tenants

WHA has commissioned a dedicated Money Advice service to support tenants who are in financial difficulties. There have been XX referrals to the service.



Tenants have been able to access grants in emergency circumstances which totalled £8,800 in the year. This offers immediate support for essentials such as fuel and food.

54 tenants have been supported with Fuel vouchers, average award is £50
62 tenants have been supported with Food Vouchers, average award £54
8 awards to purchase White goods.

We're a Living Wage Employer!

WHA is helping ensure that people can afford the cost of living by paying directly employed colleagues the real living wage.



Category	Cases	Average Award	Total Award
Energy	54	£50.24	£2,713.00
Food	62	£54.03	£3,350.00
White goods	8	£336.55	£2,692.39
Grand Total	125	£70.44	£8,805.39



Improving our homes to reduce bills for our customers.

We recognise the impact of fuel costs on our customers and are taking proactive steps to maximise the energy efficiency of our homes. We take a forward-thinking, whole property approach to retrofitting properties to increase their thermal efficiency as we work towards our sustainability goals.

We have invested in improving EPC ratings in our homes which improves thermal efficiency and reduces bills for customers.

The EPC rating has been improved through:

- Heating System upgraded to A+ rated combination boilers
- Renewable Energy water heaters and storage heaters.
- Loft insulation and cavity wall insulation

In all, 237 homes have been improved and the total saving on bills is up to £55,000.



We have already completed small-scale pilots on individual properties. The learning from these initial pilot projects will be applied across the rest of our homes. Our rolling investment programme helps reduce customers' energy bills and includes replacing windows, doors, roofs and heating systems. Wherever possible, we also upgrade loft insulation and cavity wall insulation.



We have carried out investment works to our properties that have had a positive impact on the energy efficiency of our customers' homes, has the potential to reduce their energy bills from between £143 - £400.

This investment has the benefit of Reduced Carbon Footprint through better insulated and lower energy homes aligning with sustainability goals.

Skills & Employment

WHA supports learning and skills development to improve resilience and address inequalities.

Volunteering

The volunteer team support the work of WHA by giving their time and expertise principally in the Lifetime service and in Warrington Housing Association Customer Panel.



Our Customer Panel

Our Customer Panel are a key part of our organisation. They provide valuable input to help shape and develop our policies and services. Their feedback is essential in ensuring that our services meet the real needs of the community.

Being part of this panel not only gives them the opportunity to directly influence decision-making but also promotes a sense of purpose and empowerment. This involvement fosters a strong sense of belonging and connection, which positively impacts their overall well-being. Through meaningful engagement, panel members gain confidence, develop new skills, and build stronger social networks, all of which contribute to their mental and emotional health.

We currently have 7 customers actively involved in our Customer Panel.



Our Lifetime Volunteers

A dedicated team of volunteers is central to the Lifetime service, providing support in many ways including the community café, IT mentor, activities lead, befriending, administration and meeting and greeting members.

- 46 regular volunteers in Lifetime
- HACT value for volunteering £103,903
- 5,610 Hours given in volunteering.

These incredible statistics create stronger, more connected communities.

Our volunteers reported that they all feel appreciated & reported improvements as follows:

- 75% say their mental wellbeing is improved.
- 69% say it has improved their confidence.
- 50% say their social connections have improved.



Supporting Young People

WHA has been committed to offering apprenticeships for young people since 2011 with the aim of bringing young adults into our supportive business environment to give them the opportunity to gain experience and qualifications.

Two young people have successfully moved on to roles in the housing sector on completion of their apprenticeships with us.

Partnering with colleges and universities

This year WHA has worked in partnership with colleges and universities to support learning and experience in the housing sector. Every year we provide a non-traditional placement for final year OT students giving them a wider view of the role that the third sector plays in supporting health and wellbeing. We have also worked with students of catering to provide a placement for them in our community café giving them some real-life experience to put their skills to good use.



Working with local companies

WHA is committed to using local suppliers where possible. We are committed to supporting local supply chains and businesses.

Last year we spent almost £xx with businesses with an operating base in Greater Manchester, and for every £x we spend, £x stays in the region.

X% are small and micro business with fewer than 10 employees.

(To be confirmed)

Digital Inclusion

As services are increasingly online older people risk missing out. Living healthy and active lives can be facilitated by access to online information on health, shopping, social inclusion. IT can be complicated for the less digitally literate. Lifetime helps overcome some of the barriers by giving free access to computers and broadband. and offering mentoring.

We offer mentoring so that members can get support to get online, with mobile phones. In the last year we have supported 54 people, with 117 one to one sessions and members have found these sessions very helpful.

These sessions are supported by our IT mentors who have volunteered to ensure that there is an offer on two days per week.



Case Study

Nathan joined the team to support people as a great way of ensuring equity of access, he shares our ethos of free support, he has negotiated time off from his IT role to come into the centre and run the IT mentor sessions. So far, Nathan has volunteered a total of 297 hours of mentoring, which is 102 IT sessions!

The types of things that are being supported with in addition to the basics of using a laptop/tablet/phone are:

- Emails and photos
 - Support with scam emails
 - Housing applications
 - Using phones
- Ordering online including prescriptions, green bins.

Nathan has supported members with everything from a full install of computers, to spending a lot of time with people who have never used a computer before even teaching people how to use a mouse for the first time.



Our Neighbourhoods

Our vision is to make Warrington a great place to live, in which the potential of individuals can be realised. We tackle inequalities through our social value work and invest in services that build resilience in our community.

The Gateway

The Gateway Community Resource Centre is owned by WHA is home to 20+ organisations from the public sector, the third sector and the private sector with the common aim of supporting the community in Warrington.

Organisations range from housing and homelessness to CAB, from Warrington Housing Association to Eating Disorders.

The Gateway reached the landmark of 20 years as an important community asset in 2024. Being co-located in the Gateway has benefited agencies and members of the public alike, as it fosters good relationships and better outcomes.



The Gateway is the place that people come who are seeking support, they may need in person advice about which service will best be able to help them. The reception team triage visitors and help them navigate to the right place. There is a lot of expertise within the Gateway partners that can offer front line in person support.

In 2024/25 the Gateway:

- Saw 1,099 visitors to reception
- Helped 1,255 people with emergency support in the form of fuel vouchers and food vouchers.

In addition in 2024/25, the Gateway was host to:

- 593 community support events (e.g. Bi-polar support, Talking Point, Headway group)
- 54 one off events (art displays, Volunteer training)
- 409 Specialist training or advice sessions

The Gateway supports third sector organisations with rates for office space below the market rate by approximately 20% less than commercial rent. Our social value commitment is supporting the third sector by approximately £xx rent fully occupied.

Visit www.thegateway.org.uk to learn more about the Gateway's story and discover more about the services offered.

Warrington Home Improvement Agency (WHIA)

WHIA is proud to support the community through Warrington Home Improvement Agency WHIA. WHIA supports homeowners and those in the private rented sector. WHIA's aim is to ensure that home is a place that meets their needs and supports well-being. ensuring safe, accessible, and comfortable housing for everyone, especially older people, disabled, and those living on low incomes.

WHIA plays a crucial role in helping people make necessary changes to their homes, whether it's minor repairs or major adaptations. This not only improves their quality of life but also helps them live independently in their own homes for longer.

Our clients have said that having the work done has improved how safe and secure they feel and it has improved their well-being.

WHIA offers a range of services, from providing advice and information to managing entire home improvement projects. We act as a bridge between individuals who need home adaptations, and the services required to make these changes. This includes navigating through the complexities of funding, finding reliable contractors, and ensuring that the work is completed to a high standard.

By focusing on individual needs, the agency delivers tailored solutions that make a real difference in people's lives.



We supported a couple who both have serious health issues which was exacerbated by a damp and cold home.

The caseworker worked with them to repair the home, manage the work and get benefit applications completed. As a result the couple feel much better able to manage, can afford heating and attend their appointments.

WHIA were contacted by a social worker about the poor state of the home of a client. The caseworker worked with this complex case over a long period of time to ensure that the client would consent to the improvements. The outcome was a healthier home environment for the client.

150 Small repairs

208 clients supported with self-funded adaptations.

184 larger repairs & improvements improving the standard of homes.

133 owner occupiers supported with funding for essential repairs.



Targeting Emergency needs

Working with Foundations Independent Living Trust (FILT), we have been able to intervene to help people who own their own home when gas heating fails or there is an urgent safety concern. Over 50 grants have been allocated per year which have made people safer, warmer, less stressed and less anxious.

The funding helps us to move quickly to tackle a range of problems in the homes of older and vulnerable people, and ensure work is done to the correct standards.

The local emergency grants are modest at an average of £218 and the funding has high impact and helps people to stay independent and safe in their own homes for as long as possible.



- 52 gas safety jobs have been delivered in people's homes.
- 95% of people helped were aged over 60 with low incomes and/or disabled.

Provided much-needed gas safety checks, servicing and repair of gas boilers, fires, cookers and pipe work.

Clients who have been supported:

Lady who had been admitted to hospital with suspected CO poisoning from her gas appliance

- Ukrainian refugee family with no cooking facilities
- Client who depends on 24 hour care in her home with no heating.

Beneficiaries have told us that they feel warmer as well as safer, have improved well-being, and feel reassured that the problem had been remedied. These preventive measures at modest cost also enable people to remain in their own homes, rather than having to go into hospital or other places of care.



Produced by
Warrington Housing Association
the Gateway, 89 Sankey Street,
Warrington, Cheshire, WA1 1SR

Tel: 01925 246810
www.wha.org.uk

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