



Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council

Celebrating



YEARS

of the Voluntary &
Community Sector
in Wolverhampton



Contents

Foreword	3
Introduction	5
All Saints Action Network	7
Ashmore Park Community Association	9
Beacon	11
Citizens Advice Wolverhampton	13
Contact The Elderly & Peascroft	15
Gatis Community Space	17
Gazebo Theatre in Education	19
Hope	21
Refugee & Migrant Centre	23
The Haven	25
X2Y	27
Thanks	29

Foreword



Steve Clay
Chair of WVSC

The pages that follow highlight the work, scope and scale of Wolverhampton's Voluntary and Community Sector and the impact that it has on the lives of our Citizens.

It is a sector with huge diversity, incorporating small groups whose work is carried out solely through the efforts of committed volunteers through to a small number of large organisations with a turnover of several million pounds. Many of these organisations have been serving our citizens since well before Wolverhampton became a City in 2000; some pre date any formal welfare state, having worked here for well over 100 years.

Against that backdrop WVSC is a fairly new organisation, but one that has now been working for 30 years to "maintain and develop a thriving and diverse Voluntary and Community Sector" in our City.

How we have delivered our mission has changed so much since 1988. The days of free legal advice and subsidised reprographic services have been replaced by a shift to doing with, rather than to, the organisations we support.

There has been a growing focus on partnership within and across sectors and, over the past 8 years or so, a commitment to enabling and leading collaborations which has met with significant success for our local sector.

The future will continue to be characterised by the speed of change, we are seeing the development of new models through which our sector will play an increasingly important part; models incorporating ideas like, social prescribing, social investment and a growing focus on doing things together, with citizens at the heart of decisions made about them. Certainly our sectors role is becoming increasingly important as our Public Sector colleagues face growing demand with less resources and we face the risk that even as things improve growing numbers of people get left behind.

This report attempts to illustrate in a few pages the scale, reach and diversity of our brilliant Voluntary and Community Sector. It highlights the work of a small selection of groups and organisations which we hope give a feel for the range of work that's carried out, its importance to local people, and the role that WVSC has been able to play in helping these and many other organisations be the very best that they can.





Introduction

This report is released in conjunction with the WVSC30Conference and coincides with the 30th anniversary of the formation of Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council (WVSC). It is designed to celebrate all that is great about the voluntary and community sector Wolverhampton, its size, its scope, its ability to change and innovate and the positive impact that it has on people's lives.

WVSCs mission is to maintain and develop our thriving, diverse and brilliant Voluntary and Community sector, and the pages that follow highlight the work of some of the organisations that we have worked with since 1988, and continue to do so today.

Wolverhampton is a diverse, tolerant, multi faith City with a strong sense of community. The past thirty years have seen significant change and it is well known that our City and its citizens face a number of challenges in areas such as health and education. We also face a national funding regime and focus that disadvantages us against more prosperous areas.

Despite this recent times have seen significant improvements in the fabric of our great City and this should benefit the people that live and work here. Our Cities Voluntary and Community Sector is crucial to ensuring that our progress in improving our physical environment is replicated by improvements in the lives of our communities.

The organisations that make up our Sector are formed and developed by those communities, are firmly based within them and have a strong sense of what works. Many were here, working with local people, before WVSC and some were formed before our Council existed. The challenges we face are not going to go away quickly but, as the pages that follow show, our sector and the people that it works beside offer a hope that by working consistently together our great multi-cultural, tolerant City will not only look better it will be a better place for everyone that lives here.



Another
ASAN
Initiative

Supported by
All Saints and Blakenhall
Community Development

This project
part-financed
European U

EUROPEAN
European Regional Dev

All Saints Action Network

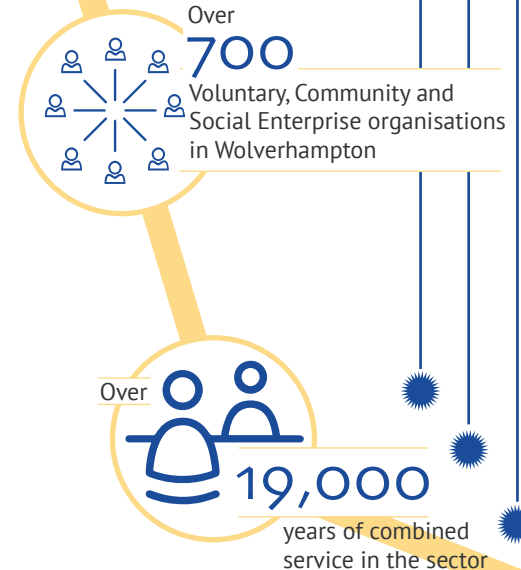
All Saints Action Network is a development trust, community enterprise and network of local people and organisations working to improve the quality of life for all people who live and work in the All Saints area of Wolverhampton. The organisation works to develop sustainable enterprises which create local jobs.

ASAN earned c500K last year delivering a range of activities for the benefit of the local community and including:

- Wood Saints, a wood recycling enterprise that also offers opportunities for people to gain work experience: People like Ibrahim who is being supported by the YMCA through Talent Match and really enjoying working at ASAN as part of his journey to employment.
- The Workspace, which offers good quality office and meeting space to mainly community focused organisations like Believe to Achieve and Spurgeons Young Carers.
- An Ofsted registered nursery offering childcare to 2-5 year olds, including free childcare to qualifying 2-4 year olds, and supporting children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.
- Sports facilities through Southside Sports, a recycling service and a tool library.

ASAN is at the forefront of innovative practice, is a committed social accounting organisation and is currently working with WVSC, who have secured funds from Barrow Cadbury to explore the opportunities presented to organisations in our City by social investment.

SECTOR STATISTICS





Ashmore Park Community Association

Ashmore Park CA has been serving the Wednesfield North area of the City for 22 years, most recently from The Hub at Ashmore Park, and has received the Queens Award for Voluntary Service in recognition of its brilliant work in the Community.

The charity is run entirely by volunteers who run a vibrant facility with 35 weekly groups covering everything from IT training to a toddler group or kickboxing to card making and 11 large scale annual events. The organisation also runs a community cafe that is open 5 days a week and organises many of its own events such as lantern parades, healthy cooking classes, and perhaps not so healthy but very inclusive Fish & Chip suppers.

There were 21,000 visits to the hub last year, and none of this would have been possible without the 35 volunteers, who would have cost £157,700 to employ and are instrumental in supporting people to learn new skills and to increase their confidence and sense of wellbeing.



Volunteering is a way of supporting others while reaping its own rewards, as illustrated by Vivien Matthews whom summed up the volunteering experience:

“You may have skills that could help other people, that would benefit them, or you may like cooking, making tea, sandwich making, all of this is a great help in a cafe. I volunteer three days a week and I love it. It has given me a lot of confidence, not only to talk to people and help them the best way I can, but they help me as well.”

WVSC worked with Ashmore Park CA last year to develop a community safety initiative as part of our Targeted Communities project and work closely with them in developing other community centred initiatives including “Wolverhampton for Everyone”

Celebrating
30 YEARS



Beacon

Beacon was established as the Wolverhampton Society for the Blind in 1875 and is the main provider of services for visually impaired people in the City. Over the past 133 years it has been dedicated to helping people with sight loss live fuller, more independent lives, work for which it received the Queen Award for Voluntary Service this year.

The Beacon Centre, has certainly developed since those early days; having opened the first ever charity shop, the organisation now run 7, have two day centres, community activities, life skills courses, a low vision and advice shop, employment programs, and a social enterprise opticians.

Beacon has over 3000 service users and works with about 400 visually impaired people a week, who are supported to be more independent and confident and less socially isolated, with increased chances of securing employment. The 270 or so volunteers, working alongside 70 staff, are key to the organisations success and volunteers committed over 50,000 hours, with a value of £327,798 to Beacon, in last 12 months.

Beacons longevity and exemplary track record makes it an excellent partner, for example as active members of the local Third Sector Partnership and working collaboratively with local, regional and national organisations in both the voluntary and public sector.



Total income of Wolverhampton
VCS is approximately

£140m
(2017/2018)



citizens
advice

citizens advice

citizens
advice

citizens

Shrewsbury



Citizens' Advice Wolverhampton

Citizens Advice Wolverhampton (CAW) is crucial to the lives of many people in our City. In the last year it worked with over 15,000 people, helping them to avoid and manage debt. In many cases the work of CSW provides a crucial lifeline, allowing customers to avoid poverty and all the implications for their health and well-being that accompany that.

For every £1 invested in CAW customers benefit to the tune of £12.23; this money is spent in the local area, helping our local economy. The financial value of the service goes beyond that and for the same £1, the value of other benefits that come from their work, such as improved productivity for customers and volunteers, is £12.74.

Above all though it's about the people and CAW plays an important role in championing the 1000s of people it supports. It does this directly through, for example, challenging the wisdom of how universal credit was being implemented at an early stage, and through partnership working, for example via membership of the Cities Inclusion Board, which is chaired by the Chief Executive of WVSC.

CAW is committed to working with others, which makes it an excellent partner. A recent example of this is our joint work funded through the Department of Health and the local CCG to develop social prescribing in our City. WVSC provides the link between local people and the wider voluntary sector in order to improve their well-being and CAW deal with any debt issues that arise as part of that work; a great example of partnership in action.



For every **£1**

received into the sector from City of Wolverhampton Council, the sector generates a further

£13





Contact the Elderly & Peascroft Wood

The Voluntary and Community Sector in Wolverhampton employs well over 4,000 people, but for every employee it is estimated that there are 3 volunteers, some as part of larger well known organisations and others volunteering for smaller groups such as these two examples.

Peascroft Wood

One of the few remaining woodlands in the Bilston area Peascroft Wood is supported by the Wildlife Trust for Birmingham and the Black Country, which works to conserve biodiversity, improve the environment and raise awareness and understanding of wildlife issues. For the past 4 years, working with 17 local volunteers, the Wildlife Trust have been striving to improve this oasis for people and wildlife; improving footpaths, removing invasive species and planting trees and woodland flora and restoring and managing the meadow at the centre of this important local asset.

The Wildlife Trust is one of some 350 organisations that work with the Volunteer Centre at WVSC, which places over 1000 people a year within those organisations: People like Raj who volunteers with the Wildlife Trust following a visit to the volunteer centre and says that he would recommend volunteering to anyone.

Contact the Elderly

here are three local Contact the Elderly groups in our City. Through these groups, volunteer drivers taking guests (75+ and living alone) out one Sunday afternoon a month for tea, cake and companionship at a volunteer 'hosts' home, a simple concept that can make a real difference to the wellbeing of everyone involved.

The most recent established group has three volunteers all recruited through the Volunteer Centre. One of those, Belinda, says that: To make a real difference to the lives of people who are lonely and may have no contact with family or friends or may struggle to get out of their houses and not see anyone from day to day makes being a volunteer really worthwhile.



There are over

12,000

formal volunteers within the voluntary sector.



Gatis Community Space

Gatis Community Space is a local community group based at the former Gatis Street adventure playground in the Whitmore Reans area of the City, it is an example of our enterprising voluntary and community sector at its best.

The groups aim is to involve the whole community to come together, have pride in their neighbourhood, have fun, get healthier, learn new things and break down any cultural barriers which may exist.

From small beginnings in 2013 Gatis have been supported by WVSC to raise funds from Power to Change (a community trust fund), ESF, the Police and Crime Commissioner and Creative Black Country. This has allowed them to employ a small staff team which works with 115 volunteers to provide a huge range of projects with and for the local community. These include: a community cafe offering affordable vegetarian food, a community garden, a real junk food project, surplus food market, community film club, free child care provision, clothes swap events, home education activities and a wide ranging volunteer program.

Gatis attracts 500 visitors a month, and growing – the involvement of its volunteers is the equivalent of employing a further 5 full time staff and the impact of volunteering is brilliantly summed up by Su, a volunteer who suffered a breakdown in 2015, visited Gatis, volunteered on the junk food project and then tending the community garden and said: “after only 3 months of being part of the Gatis family I now feel positive and stronger than I was before... they have contributed in showing me that there is a better life, I just needed to believe in myself”.





Gazebo Theatre in Education

Gazebo Theatre Group is based in Bilston and has spent the last 40 years promoting social, economic, educational and artistic development through the creative arts. Last year they brought over 850K into Wolverhampton to support some of our most vulnerable local people. They provide mentoring and work readiness support for unemployed adults, who face additional barriers and are part of the local Headstart program.

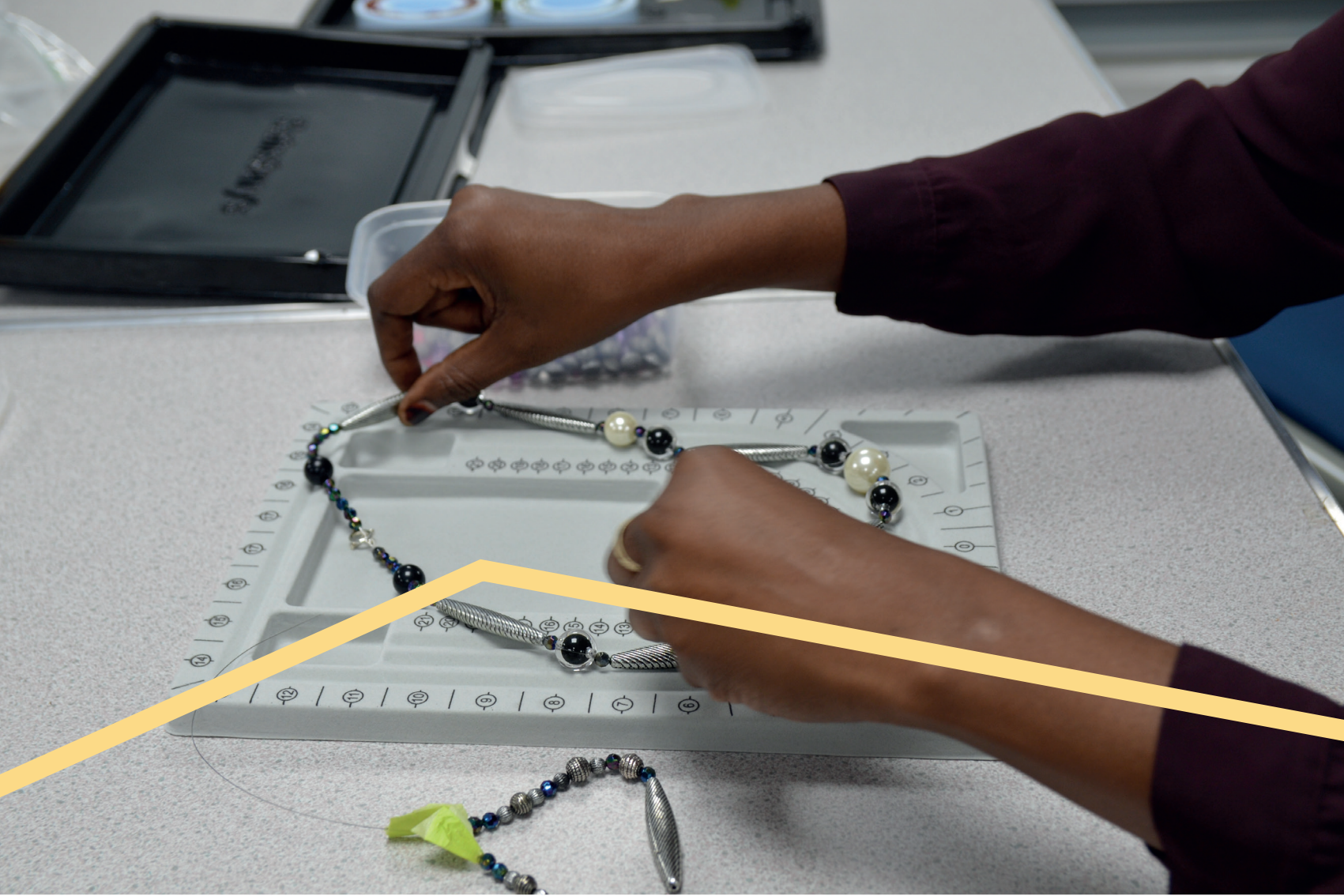
Gazebo has been working in partnership with WVSC for 5 years as part of Talent Match, which is a nationally recognised programme that works with young people who are furthest from the workplace. As one of two local “hubs” Gazebo have been particularly successful in increasing the confidence of young people whose barriers to progressing include mental ill health and learning and physical disabilities or who have come from care or prison. They have achieved remarkable results with, for example, 119 young people (and counting) finding jobs.

People like Brett who faces significant challenges including physical disabilities, a stammer and a history of being bullied which meant that he had very low self-confidence. Since joining Talent Match Brett has completed a 12 week Prince's Trust Youth Program, has taken part in a performance for Gazebo and performed as a singer in the Talent Match band; his confidence has soared. He has now secured himself a work placement at Castlecroft Primary School, and completed a mentoring course and on-line courses in mental health. Brett now plans to work with other young people who face similar experiences to him and will soon be starting a Teaching Assistant Course. Thanks to Gazebo and Talent Match he has solid plans in place for his career and his future now looks bright.



The monetary value of volunteering time is estimated at up to

£36m



Hope Community

Hope Community, with eight staff and 41 volunteers, has been working in the heart of the Heath Town Estate, one of the most deprived communities in the Country, since 1985. It works to build trusting and respectful relationships with people of all ages; the young at risk of becoming involved in negative lifestyles; women experiencing challenging situations in their lives; older people at risk of becoming isolated and lonely in their own homes and people who feel they have no future or aspirations.

Within that environment the Hope Community seek out the most vulnerable and isolated people like 12 year old Simon, (not his real name), who had recently moved to Heath Town, and whose behaviour at home and school was causing concern. Simon experienced alcohol misuse and domestic violence at home, was excluded from school because of his behaviour and felt isolated with no friends. He lacked confidence and had very low self-esteem His Dad asked Hope if they could help.

Kindness, patience, hard work and excellent partnership working led by Hope and involving organisations like Re-entry, WVSC, through Think Family Champions, and the strengthening families' hub, have paid off. Simon is due to return to school, has been referred for counselling and has changed from an isolated young man who struggled to engage, to one who is proud to make cakes for a local fundraising event. Hope have worked with Simons' mum to help her become less isolated and this has helped his family and their relationships. Simon now feels that he belongs and, unlike before, regularly has a smile on his face.



Over
4,400
paid employees work
in the voluntary and
community sector
across the City of
Wolverhampton.

There is a ratio of at least
3 **volunteers** to every
1 **paid employee**



Refugee & Migrant Centre

No organisation better illustrates the diversity of our City than the Refugee and Migrant Centre which has received national publicity in its role in championing the rights of new arrivals to our Country and City.

RMC offer free impartial advice and guidance on: Citizenship; access to education; employment support; family support; access to healthcare; housing; immigration (OISC regulated); National Asylum Support Service issues; voluntary returns and reintegration assistance and welfare benefits. Their service users come from over 120 countries including Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran, Zimbabwe, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia and Eritrea as well as from the new EU member states, mainly from Lithuania, Poland, Latvia and Slovakia.

With a small staff team supported by 163 volunteers who speak a total of 49 languages, RMC supported 3111 people in Wolverhampton last year and received an average of 60 visits a day from people seeking support.

By working with new arrivals early RMC avoids difficulties later on that can be damaging to the customer and expensive to resolve. They work with WVSC as part of the Prevention Partnership which is aimed at reducing pressure on health services within community and hospital settings by ensuring people get the right information to keep well and use services most appropriate to them.



DID YOU KNOW?

1

Did you know that WVSC secured and sub contracted almost £3M last year making it a major funder of our Sector



The Haven

The Haven supports women and children who are vulnerable to domestic violence, abuse and homelessness and is one of a number of organisations in our City that have been awarded the Queens Award for Voluntary Service in recognition of its excellent work. The Haven offers accommodation and support in the community for those who are among the most vulnerable in our City.

The staff team is supported by a range of volunteers, including via an oversees volunteering programme, and the financial contribution of volunteering at the Haven is estimated at £574,540.

In the last year the organisation supported 737 children and 1162 women. Women like Adele who went to the Haven aged 21, with her grandmother following a severe physical assault by an ex- boyfriend in front of her child. When Adele contacted the police and the Haven it was only after a number of violent incidents had taken place; she was worried that talking about what was happening to her would only make things worse. She felt depressed, isolated and fearful. Adele struggled to break away from her ex- boyfriend

who continued to be violent and to harass and threaten her on Social media. She needed ongoing and intensive support from the Haven staff but is now making progress in her words” my journey isn’t over, I’m still working through the trauma and coming to terms with the abuse but know I have made positive steps towards a life that is finally free from abuse.

Good governance is particularly important when the right structures can literally mean the difference between life a death. WVSC have been pleased to provide governance support to the Haven and to work in partnership with them on a number of projects including Improving Futures and more recently Think Family Champions.

The importance of this service is recognised by our City Council and for every £1 that they invest £4.77 goes towards supporting some of the most vulnerable people in our City to be able to move on to becoming full citizens living without fear.

2

Did you know that WVSC placed over 1000 volunteers within our sector last year.

3

Did you know that our Cities Third Sector Partnership has over 100 members



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X2Y

X2Y works to promote social inclusion and equality and to preserve the physical and mental health of LGBT young people aged 11-25 in Wolverhampton, as well as challenging discrimination, particularly on the grounds of age, gender identity and sexual orientation.

A small team of staff and volunteers provide mentoring support for young people from the LGBTQ+ communities, along with information, advice and emotional support and offer facilities and opportunities for recreation and education. They also offer training and awareness raising on all aspects of discrimination and how it can be tackled.

Partnership working is often a real strength within the Voluntary and Community Sector and X2Y work closely with a range of other organisations in the City including the LGBT Alliance, The University, the Way, and WVSC who “have given excellent support and advice on a range of topics.[and] keeps us up-to-date with local initiatives and funding opportunities”. X2Y worked with WVSC to secure an awards for all grant and were supported to receive funding from Creative Black Country, (a project run by the four Black Country CVSs), culminating in an exhibition entitled “OUT” at Wolverhampton Art Gallery.

They are part of the Wellbeing Partnership, led by WVSC, aimed at tackling loneliness and isolation in our City, and currently awaiting the outcome of an application to the BIG Lottery Building Communities Fund.

4

Did you know that in the last year WVSC helped organisations to apply directly and successfully for well over £1M and, indirectly through providing information and more general support, many millions more.

5

Did you know that our Sector offered social prescriptions to almost 600 people in the first year of the Cities social prescribing service

A
SPECIAL
THANK
YOU

Thank you!

Thank You

Thank You

Thank You

Thank You

Thanks

A huge thank to everyone has who made this report possible; those organisations that fund our sector, support us and work in partnership with us and most of all, the brilliant groups, organisations and people in Wolverhampton that make up our fantastic sector.





Please follow us online...

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