

St Paul's Hostel - Application Pack Supporting Information

Executive Summary

St Paul's Hostel is based in Worcester and was established in 1977 to support the homeless community at that time. It has grown and developed into an organisation that focuses not only on an individual's housing crisis, but its unique Trauma Informed model of delivery, enables specialist staff to work with them to understand, address and better manage to reasons behind it. The charity works with men and woman aged 18 plus, all of whom are or have been homeless, of whom most have complex issues such as substance misuse, addictions, previous trauma including physical and sexual abuse; some of the most vulnerable members of society.

90% of the referrals we receive come from Worcester, however we regularly receive referrals from across the West Midlands as well as further afield.

It remains the only high tolerance hostel in Worcester with a growing accommodation portfolio designed to support beneficiaries at various stages of the recovery. This includes our hostel, move on accommodation & Housing First, bespoke wrap around support, counselling, training and employment programmes. All designed to ensure that residents feel safe, empowered and can better manage emotional and psychological pressures and re-engage with a community from which they have become isolated from.

Our overall aim is to 'make Worcester a City where homelessness is rare, brief and non-recurrent' and in order to do this, it is essential that a cross sector approach to address homelessness is proactive, productive and responds to the needs of the community in which it works. St Paul's is at the forefront of this development, leadership, innovation and influence. Their success has enabled them to establish strong and respected links across all sectors. It has an excellent track record of managing grant income and contract delivery. It offers residents employment opportunities within the organisation, as well as externally and reports success not only for residents but also the local community resulting in a cost saving to the public purse.

St Paul's Hostel, Worcester

Our mission is '*to help people live through homelessness in order that they have a place where they belong*'

From humble beginnings, our accommodation includes our hostel at Tallow Hill (our main site) which accommodates up to 42 individuals and 2 independent flats and 4 resettlement properties, situated across the city. These properties accommodate up to 24 individuals. In January 2020, we were awarded a contract by the Local Authority to deliver "Housing First, Worcester" pilot. This project currently has 46 participants. We have 21 FTE staff members and 112 registered volunteers.

Delivery & Services: We work with some of the most vulnerable members of society, all of whom are, or have been homeless and are dealing with complex issues including substance misuse, offending behaviour and/or family trauma. The events that lead to some becoming homeless are not always obvious or straightforward. At St Paul's we work tirelessly to help people live through homelessness and in order to improve care and support, we have embedded the concepts of Psychologically Informed Environment (PIE) and Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) across the organisations.

These concepts are underpinned by our 'Theory of Change', where the 'End State' [*'People who leave St Paul's have a place where they belong; the skills, capacity and enough support so that Worcestershire is a place where homelessness is rare, brief and non-recurrent'*] is achieved through 'Decisive Conditions' (interventions) including managing emotional/psychological pressure; feeling safe, stable, secure and doing purposeful things with their time. In order to achieve this, four key elements must be at the root of our practice.

1. **Protect:** Build psychological safety of the people who come to us for help. Not only must we keep them safe but they must also feel safe
2. **Recover:** Building relationships and resilience are the keys to recovery
3. **Re-connect:** People need friends, help and support in order to establish an inter-dependent life

4. **Prevent:** Work with partners to prevent homelessness at societal/systemic level

The outcomes of this are that people feel their place is safe, stable and secure. They are better able to manage emotional and psychological pressures and they have opportunity and are encouragement to do purposeful things with their time, feeling good about themselves and build trust.

“The core experience of psychological trauma are dissemination and disconnection from others. Recovery, therefore, is based upon the empowerment of the survivors and the creation of new connections”

Herman (1992) Trauma & Recovery P133

At St Paul’s we use trauma as a lens through which we look to understand why a person arrives at our door. In our experience, trauma, often from early life relationships and often recurring is prevalent in many of the people who come to us for help. We recognise the damage trauma can do to the character of a person and the negative effect it has on the choices they have. In reversing these effects we have learnt that trust is the essential ingredient. The essence of a Trauma Informed Care (TIC) approach changes the nature of the question we ask from ‘*what’s wrong with you?*’ to ‘*what happened to you?*’ This new emphasis seeks to connect the individual’s trauma history to their current behaviour rather than seeing the behaviour as a character flaw. The screening of Acute Childhood Experiences (ACE’s) is also fundamental to our service delivery. Combining this and the TIC approach enables us to address the impact of adverse experiences and equip residents with the required skills to deal with them. We employ the specialist skills in order to achieve success and our services include:

- ❖ **DIRECT ACCESS COUNSELLING & MINDFULNESS SESSIONS** - An accredited Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) & Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing (EMDR) programme, designed to meet the needs of the client. Counselling is based upon the principles of CBT, Person-Centred Therapy and the Humanistic Approach. By using a mixture of these approaches, we are able to work with the client to identify why they display certain behaviours and work on changing these into positive actions. Each session is tailored to the needs of the individual.
- ❖ **KITCHEN ASSISTANT TRAINING PROGRAMME:** Whilst undertaking on-site training, residents work with our full-time Chef & Catering Manager to provide daily meals for our residents. They acquire basic catering skills, and learn about dietary needs, nutritional value, growing and using fresh produce from our established ‘kitchen garden’ and cooking on a budget. To date we have been able to offer employment to 10 residents and former residents. These posts not only include Kitchen Assistant Trainees but also domestic/housekeeping and support staff. We also work with external organisations to facilitate further development with placements, volunteering & employment, with some residents securing employment in hotels with living accommodation.

The programme also enables residents to volunteer as they see this as a positive step forward in their recovery and the prospects available. ‘Casual’ volunteers help when they feel they are able; all of whom are at different stages of their recovery and see the flexibility in volunteering beneficial. ‘Regular’ volunteers help most days, including serving, cleaning, basic kitchen duties and also learn to cook.

- ❖ **RESETTLEMENT SUPPORT:** Our resettlement houses are for people who have been residents at the hostel and their progression has been such that we, and they, feel they are able to move on to manage their own tenancy. Some have expressed the need for continued bespoke support and to this end, we provide 16 hrs p/wk dedicated resettlement support. This enables early intervention if and when issues arise and ensures that residents continue to feel safe and reduces the risk of feeling isolated and vulnerable.

- ❖ **HOUSING FIRST, WORCESTER:** St Paul's works in partnership with the Worcestershire districts councils, the county council and housing providers including Platform Housing Group, Citizen, Rooftop and Stonewater. The overall philosophy is to provide a stable, independent home, intensive personalised support and case management to homeless people with multiple and complex needs. Housing is seen as a human right by Housing First services. There are no conditions around 'housing readiness before providing someone with a home; rather, secure housing is viewed as a stable platform from which other issues can be addressed. 'Housing First' is a different model because it provides housing 'first', as a matter of right. An internationally recognised, evidence-based model of housing and support for those with chronic housing, health/social care needs. The aim is to end repeat and chronic homelessness for a group of people for whom other services are ineffective. Often deemed as 'unhousable' or 'poor at engaging' to date all of our participants have maintained their tenancy and engaging with their Case Managers & support network. This project operates across Worcester, Wychavon, and Malvern & Wyre Forest and recently extended to Redditch and Bromsgrove.

Our services are available to everyone within our accommodation portfolio.

Our model of delivery requires a number of elements to be in place, including a focus on safety, emotional intelligence, connection, communication, resilience and healing. We focus not only on supporting an individual's housing crisis but also helping them understand, address and manage the underlying reasons or causes of it. We have seen how past experiences are often a major contributing factor to their situation.

This model differentiates us from other charities in this sector. It requires the employment of specialist staff and a focus on safety, emotional intelligence, connection, communication, resilience and healing. Our delivery model is designed specifically to support people to 'live through homelessness' & interventions provide the skills required to address complex issues, prepare and support their progress into resettlement and becoming productive members of a community that they have become isolated from.

The Need: We know from local housing data that Worcester City is highly reliant on Private Landlords. There are 38,000 rooms with Private Landlord's compared to less than 10,000 social housing provision. The number of private landlords are increasing and will continue to increase. Private rental costs are higher than social housing and there is a significant and increasing gap between private rents & the benefit the state pays towards rent. The gap makes private renting increasingly unaffordable to most if not all of our participants and waiting lists for social housing are very long.

Opportunities for upskilling, training, gaining and retaining employment are essential in order that our participants are better able to secure suitable accommodation, retain those tenancies and continue on their journey to becoming productive members of a community from which they have isolated from. St Paul's offers residents employment and training opportunities and works closely with external training providers, employers and education facilities.

Experience & Track Record: St Paul's is at the forefront of coordinating and influences services across all sectors. It plays a strategic role in developments and decisions working cohesively with organisations including Local Authorities, health & well-being organisations, local businesses, education and other charitable organisations. We have established respected links across all sectors & remain the only high tolerance homeless hostel in Worcestershire. We are at the forefront of development and innovation addressing the needs of this vulnerable client group and seen as exemplars of best practice and will see the role out of Trauma Informed Care approach across all districts. Our Chief Executive has been pivotal in establishing a cross-sector forum to address the issues of rough sleeping and homelessness across the City. The 'Worcester Cares' forum is a proactive alliance to make Worcester 'a city where homelessness is rare, brief and seldom recurring'. He is also leading on the development of the new local authority Homeless Strategy.

This example of leadership and best practise was pivotal in the coordinating of services during the COVID-19 pandemic, as we continued to be at the forefront, coordinating a multi-agency approach to ensure the needs of the homeless community were being met, particularly rough sleepers. Working with the Local Authority, we acquired a 14 property to provide accommodation and support for rough sleepers in direct response to government's 'Everyone In' directive. This leadership is on-going as our lives continue to be impacted by the virus.

Governance: The Charity is governed by an independent board of trustees, all of whom have local experience of homelessness, mental health, financial and business development and include Mental Health Practitioners, Solicitor, Managing Directors and current & former members of West Mercia Police St Paul's Hostel • Our Trustees (stpaulshostel.co.uk)

Our trustees meet quarterly with bi-monthly sub committees including Finance, Infrastructure and Fundraising. The Senior Management team meet weekly and comprises of Chief Executive, Head of Finance (and Company Secretary), Housing Manager, Facilities & Support Manager, Fundraising Manager and Housing First Manager. All of whom are Trauma Informed trained. St Paul's Hostel • Our Staff (stpaulshostel.co.uk)

In order to deliver a truly person centred service, it is important to ensure that our residents have a 'voice'. To this end, we hold a weekly user forum. The 'Bacon Sarnie Group' (BSG) provides a safe arena for residents to discuss concerns, raise and resolve issues and suggest improvements and indeed new services that they feel would benefit them. Many things have been implemented as a direct result of this group, including new staff appointments, including Resettlement Support Workers, additional Hostel Workers, a resident appointed as volunteer Peer Support and a number social activities than support personal development and integration. A number of our residents are encouraged to attend meetings with funders and other services to share their experiences and are advocates for raising awareness of the issues faced by the homeless community, giving first-hand experience and knowledge. Their testimonies are hard hitting, real and bring to life the challenges and barriers that are faced on a daily basis. Their testimonies create change!

Impact & Success: In order to measure success, we must first understand what 'success' means for the individual we are working with.

Success is not always whether someone maintains their tenancy, gets a job, training or even 'exits service support'. We work with very complex individuals with profound experiences that have a long term impact on their lives, therefore we acknowledge that relapse can and does happen. Our delivery model, gives us the skills & expertise to recognise and support the individual at such times so that recovery can continue. The measurement of success therefore, has to be as bespoke and individual as the services we provide.

Since 2017, we have employed 10 residents and ex-residents as Kitchen Assistants, Domestic/Housekeeping, and Support Worker & Peer Mentors. In addition, we have current and former residents who volunteer.

Kitchen Assistant Training programme: Greg Dobson, Catering Manager explains the impact: *"The impact that these positions have on those employed is fantastic! It gives them a sense of purpose; a reason to get up in the morning. Their general attitude is much more positive and that shows in their work and appearance. I try to impose a sense of responsibility into them also. The importance of the training/employment opportunities that are offered by the hostel are so important. When the residents approach me they are generally lacking in confidence, their appearance is generally a little scruffy and have little to no knowledge of cooking, nutrition and budgeting. I am proud that when they leave the hostel they have a much better understanding of these things."*

