

## **WORCESTER CARES: HELPING PEOPLE OFF THE STREET**

If you visit, live or work in Worcester City, you will sometimes see people on the street. Some sleeping rough, in shop doorways or along the river, some are drinking excessively in the City centre, and others are begging – occasionally aggressively. Each needs help, whether they belong to only one or all three of these groups.

Our city does not want to demonise people on the street for the situation they find themselves in. Now charities and services from across the City have come together to help people you see on the street.

We know many who live and work in Worcester City, as well as many tourists and visitors, are compassionate people who want to help but are not sure how to. *Worcester Cares* is a united umbrella approach, which helps all the charities, and support services coordinate their work.

Here is what you can now do to help and be part of *Worcester Cares*;

### **Tell us**

Tell us about someone by using *Street Link*. By using the Street Link app, you can note down the place or street a person is and we can send someone to see him or her.

**[www.streetlink.org.uk](http://www.streetlink.org.uk)** or by calling **0300 500 0914**.

### **Tell them**

Explain to the person that there are charities, churches and services in the City where they can get help. Magg's Day Centre, St Paul's Hostel and Caring for Communities and People (CCP) have experienced and trained staff who know what to do. Tell them to visit The Hive and the City Council staff will help them make the connection.

### **Donate to *Worcester Cares***

Help people off the street by supporting those charities who can support them. A small donation makes an enormous difference. £2 would pay for a meal. £5 would provide services to get someone off the street. Donate £2 by texting WORC02 or £5 by texting WORC05 to 70070

### **Volunteer for one of the *Worcester Cares* charities or services.**

The charities in Worcester who work with people on the street have many different opportunities to volunteer time to help. Visit the websites of Maggs Day Centre, CCP or St Paul's Hostel to find out more.

**[www.maggsdaycentre.co.uk](http://www.maggsdaycentre.co.uk)**

www.ccp.org.uk  
www.stpaulshostel.co.uk

## SOME BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### WHY ARE PEOPLE ON THE STREET?

Rough sleeping, excessive street drinking and begging are not the same. People who beg are not necessarily rough sleeping (or indeed without a place to stay) and someone who sleeps rough may not need or want to beg.

Many people who find themselves on the street have unmet care and support needs. Those of us who work directly with them know this through the work we do every day. Some of their problems are complex and do take time to solve. Some have a background of childhood abuse or neglect. Quite a few have had alcoholic or violent parents. Poor physical health can be obvious, but there are hidden mental health illnesses, which often lead to and are made worse by, drug and drink addictions.

### WHAT ARE WE DOING ABOUT IT?

No single organisation can tackle these problems alone. *Worcester Cares* brings together local charities, the Police, local businesses, the City Council, churches and many other organisations to coordinate their efforts and work. Whether a person is rough sleeping, begging or street drinking, all the *Worcester Cares* organisations will work together to help the person off the street.

The City already has an infrastructure to support people but as the problem has increased, public resources have not kept pace. It is now more important than ever, therefore, to coordinate the activities of Local Authorities, and other public and voluntary organisations, so that we do not duplicate or waste resources. Some key organisations working under the *Worcester Cares* umbrella are:

- **St Paul's Hostel.** They run a 46-bed hostel that provides a safe and secure place to stay, two meals a day, help to access state benefits, on site counselling and to training and employment opportunities. St Paul's also has thirty rooms in City based housing when someone is ready to move on from the Hostel. St Paul's services use the Psychologically Informed Environment (known as PIE) and work with a person to resolve the root-cause of the problem.
- **Maggs Day Centre.** They run the City Day Centre and provide food, health drop service in partnership with the NHS, clothing and activity centre. A new Countywide Outreach Service, Maggs' Outreach And Transition Service (called MOATS for short) has just set up to engage with people on the street.

- The Homelessness Charity, **Caring For Communities and People** (known as CCP). Established in 1989, they run the Homeless Prevention and Engagement Service, (HoPES) commissioned by Worcester City Council, on behalf of all the Worcestershire local authorities. This includes the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) shelter that operates in extreme weather.
- **Worcester City Council** has a responsibility to provide advice and guidance to people who find themselves homeless. You can access City Council services and those of other organisations who support getting people off the street by talking to the Homeless team in The Hive or calling 01905 722589.
- The **YMCA Worcestershire** provides accommodation and has specialist expertise for younger people.
- **Swanswell**. A national drug and alcohol recovery charity, Swanswell deliver the county-wide drug and alcohol treatment service. They provide a treatment service in Worcester City and its staff work alongside community based GPs. They are open 5 days a week Monday to Friday and a person needing help can either self-refer, visit their GP or be helped with a referral from one of the other Worcester Cares organisations or other professional agencies.
- There are also Worcester Street Pastors, City churches and organisations that provide food through street kitchens and a listening ear.

### **WORCESTER CARES – A BRIEF HISTORY**

Last autumn the Worcester City Homeless and Vulnerable People forum (known as ‘The Forum’) was established. The Forum has brought together a wide array of charities as well as state run services from Local Authorities and Health in one place. These Forum contributors nominated a small working group of 6 people. This group, drawn from partners, works collaboratively to coordinate responses and look for collective solutions.

The group has now developed eight-work streams and are making significant progress. The work streams are:

#1 Collate data and information to generate intelligence that can inform appropriate and effective street-level engagements with vulnerable people but also produce insights to shape the big decisions about the services we need in the future.

#2 Engage beneficiaries so they have a stake in the design of the services and use their insights to improve the current services and develop new ones.

#3 Develop a common narrative that explains to well-intentioned citizens what is going on and how they can help in an appropriate way. This has created the *Worcester Cares* initiative.

#4 Work together to create agreed and shared Performance Outcomes so everyone works to the same ends.

#5 Provide more Collaborative training for staff and volunteers that is focussed on the people we help so that we work to keep everyone safe from harm.

#6 Improve our Policies and procedures so that we join up our safety nets.

#7 Create streamlined clear engagement and decision making structure so that everyone can be included and make a contribution.

#8 Have a focus on homeless prevention (*prevention is better than cure*) and develop and promote the new homeless prevention services that are happening as a result of the new Homelessness Reduction Act

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **What should I do to help?**

Remember “***Tell them: Tell us***”. There is already help in the city at Maggs Day Centre, St Paul’s and Caring For Communities and People (CCP). These organisations know what to do to help and will make sure a person accesses the right help. Use the Streetlink service (download the app) to tell us about someone. Go to the website [www.streetlink.org.uk](http://www.streetlink.org.uk) or call **0300 500 0914**.

#### **Should I give money to people who ask for help on the street?**

This *is your choice* but Worcester Cares wants you to know that cash is very unlikely to be spent on the things people say they need help with: food, clothing or accommodation. The hard-won experience of those who work with people on the street is that money nearly always goes on hard drugs or alcohol. That’s why we have introduced texted donations under the *Worcester Cares* umbrella: to give you a way of ensuring your donation can make a difference.

#### **Should we give out tents?**

Homelessness is more than ‘rooflessness, it’s about the lack of stable, secure and affordable accommodation. Providing tents might seem like an easy solution but it rarely leads to someone accessing the help they really need. Local homeless charities do not advise members of the public to give out tents.

**Is it okay to give someone a cup of tea or coffee and something to eat?**

Yes, please. And it's even better if you can also take the opportunity to tell the person where they can get help.

**Should I give money to people selling the Big Issue?**

If you can buy a copy of the Big Issue, please do so. The Big Issue is a long established and well-run national scheme. The city vendors are registered and approved and they purchase the magazines from the local distributor at cost price and then sell to the public. The Big Issue is also a good way of understanding more about homelessness. Big Issue vendors like to talk to people and if you have time, please stop for a chat and get to know the person. Please note that Big Issue sellers are not allowed to ask for additional money. A key point of the scheme is to reintroduce people to working, and help them away from begging.

**The person tells me they are 'banned' from Magg's Day Centre or St Paul's Hostel – is this true?**

St Paul's Hostel and Magg's Day Centre have over 70 years of experience between them. They know how important it is for people to be able to access their services and suspending someone from accessing services is the last resort. It is also important for the public to understand why someone might be suspended from services for a short period. The three principle reasons are; *the dealing of illegal drugs, threatening violence or being violent to others in the service.*

**Should I give money to people who are busking or who have drawn street art on the pavement?**

Busking and street artists are not usually sleeping rough, homeless or classed as beggars. In general, if someone is providing something *in return for a donation*, for example singing, playing an instrument or has created a chalk drawing on the pavement, then there is nothing wrong with a donation.

**What is the role of the police?**

All the evidence shows sleeping on the street is dangerous and bad for the person's health and well-being. The police are compassionate people and local police officers work very closely with the City Homeless charities and the City Council to find people the help they need. The public and local business also expect the Police to enforce the law when a crime is committed. Only as a last resort, when a person has committed a criminal offence, or to keep a person safe, do they take action.

**Where does the donated money go to?**

EMBARGO  
NOT TO BE RELEASED BEFORE 0900 MONDAY 9 JULY 2018

The money donated through Worcester Cares goes to the front-line charities who are working with rough sleepers, the homeless and people who are addicted to drink or drugs. There is a 5% administrative commission by the Justgiving scheme. But 95p of every pound you give will go directly to work with rough sleepers, the homeless, and those with addictions.

**CONTACT**

Either Jonathan Sutton [Jonathan.Sutton@stpaulshostel.co.uk](mailto:Jonathan.Sutton@stpaulshostel.co.uk)

Phoebe Dawson [phoebe.dawson@worcesterbid.com](mailto:phoebe.dawson@worcesterbid.com)

6  
EMBARGO  
NOT TO BE RELEASED BEFORE 0900 MONDAY 9 JULY 2018