

Wyre Forest and South Worcestershire Nightstop and Mediation Service

ANNUAL REPORT

emergency accommodation • family mediation • training & education

2022/23

Preventing youth homelessness starts here



CONTENTS

5	FOREWORD
6	COLLABORATION
8	WHO WE ARE
10	OUR VISION, MISSION AND VALUES
12	OUR PARTNERS
14	THE CHAIR'S MESSAGE
16	THE CHIEF EXEC'S MESSAGE
18	CASE STUDIES
22	MITCH'S BENEVOLENT FUND
26	THE DIFFERENCE WE MAKE



FOREWORD

BY THE HIGH SHERIFF

MY ROLE AS HIGH SHERIFF OFFERS ME THE IDEAL OPPORTUNITY IN THIS POST COVID ENVIRONMENT TO ENCOURAGE AND ENABLE CHARITIES, KEY SERVICES AND ORGANISATIONS TO COLLABORATE IN THIS HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT OF INCREASING CYP HOMELESSNESS, MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES, ABUSE AND THE BURGEONING COST OF LIVING CRISIS.

By working together, we can not only enhance the lines of communication, but hopefully improve prevention and early intervention. We know resources are stretched to the limit, but there are simply too many children and young people in crisis in Worcestershire. There are some wonderful people working in support services and charities across the county, but this current perfect storm is seeing children not being reached early enough to prevent them being groomed into criminal activity, subjected to domestic and sexual abuse and homelessness.

I am grateful to Nightstop who work tirelessly at the sharp end offering these young people in crisis a brilliant wrap around service, giving them a safe place to stay, with support and mediation and so much more.



I am also grateful to Night Stop for enabling our newly formed Forum where we are seeing some excellent 'cross fertilisation' between attendees at our inaugural meeting. I do believe that together we can make a difference, collaboration is the key to ensure we are keeping the communication going and maximising the resources available to us.

Louise Hewett
High Sheriff of Worcestershire 2023/24

COLLABORATION

The benefits of corporate and charity partnerships

In September 2021, a study revealed that four out of five corporate partners were expecting to increase their investment in charities in the medium term. Not only is this down to the need for corporates to align their values and invest in some of the biggest social and environmental issues facing society today, but it also bears witness to the true workplace benefits of corporate charity partnerships.

So why is partnering with a charity so beneficial?

Staff engagement and morale

57% of respondents to a 2019 Charities Aid Foundation survey agreed charitable giving in the workplace boosted morale. The polling found that 50% of respondents thought that all businesses had a responsibility to support charities, while 49% thought that employees should give staff time off each year to volunteer for a good cause – a growing trend among employers.

Positive brand association

Today, social media provides a fantastic platform for customer engagement, and corporate philanthropy is a terrific way to engage with younger customers who are particularly savvy in supporting and shouting about ethical brands.

Increased networking opportunities

Working with a charity partner is a valuable tool in widening business networks. Charity dinners through to golf days provide opportunities to socialise with other businesses who could become potential new clients. Businesses you meet this way will also have the bonus of a shared common goal – supporting a charity.



Developing important mutually beneficial business skills

Corporate charity partnerships provide ample opportunities to upskill both the charity and corporate employees. There has been a shift towards the skills that charities can offer their corporate partners.

Alignment with a worthwhile cause is not only a more human approach to business and a way to engage with staff, but also now a real requirement of most businesses to stay relevant and marketable to a customer base which increasingly bases its buying decisions on causes that are important to them. Today, there is real value in corporate charity partnerships – relationships that help both charity and corporate achieve their long-term goals

Michael G Forrester CMgr MA

Chair Herefordshire and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce

With extracts from the Rainbow Trust and Charities Aid Foundation research.

TODAY, SOCIAL MEDIA PROVIDES A FANTASTIC PLATFORM FOR CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT, AND CORPORATE PHILANTHROPY IS A TERRIFIC WAY TO ENGAGE WITH YOUNGER CUSTOMERS WHO ARE PARTICULARLY SAVVY IN SUPPORTING AND SHOUTING ABOUT ETHICAL BRANDS.

WHO WE ARE

We are a local charity focused on preventing youth homelessness in Worcestershire providing Emergency accommodation in the homes of trained and approved volunteer hosts to young people aged 16-25. They receive a bed for the night, a hot meal and a listening ear. We aim to enable them to move from a point of crisis to ongoing support until their homelessness situation is resolved.

Free mediation and conflict coaching to young people aged 11-25 and their parent/carer. We aim to strengthen family relationships through mediation. We aim to build resilience and confidence through conflict coaching.

Counselling for young people aged 16-25 who are being accommodated by a volunteer host or accessing mediation.

A school education programme to teach primary or secondary students the realities of youth homelessness, dispel the myths and stereotypes surrounding this, and equip them with the knowledge to know where to access help when the going gets tough.

Life skills training to young people aged 11-25 in Health and Wellbeing and aged 16-25 in Managing a Tenancy. We aim to improve their self-awareness and boost emotional wellbeing as well as learn the skills to help them sustain a tenancy and live independently.



OUR VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

Our Vision

is an end to youth homelessness in Worcestershire. We believe every young person deserves a safe place to sleep and the support needed to thrive and to play an active role within their community.

Our Mission

to empower young people to achieve their full potential by giving them somewhere safe to stay, the skills to develop and maintain stronger relationships, opportunities to learn, volunteer and live independently.

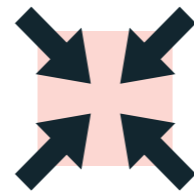


Our Values



HUMAN

We are real people, supporting real people.



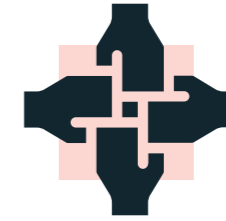
WE ARE ONE

Regardless of role, title or status within the organisation, there is a golden thread that joins us all together. From Trustees to Team Members, to Young People and our Hosts we operate as one with our collective sleeves rolled up.



AGILITY

The world around us is changing and we know we can't stand still. Our 3 year Strategic Plan is focused on ensuring that our core services of emergency accommodation and mediation remain both effective and efficient, whilst being able to adapt to the needs of our young people and our community.



SAFE PAIR OF HANDS

Trust is central to all our relationships. And what we say we're going to do, we make sure we do it.



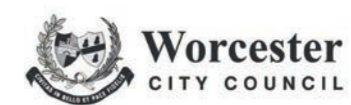
NEVER GIVE UP

Most importantly, we are relentless in pursuing our core purpose of preventing homelessness by empowering young people to reach their full potential. Whether that's in responding to a time critical situation or our focus on ensuring the long sustainability of Nightstop, we don't stop until we have established a way forward.

OUR PARTNERS

We are having to meet increasing demand, a task made more challenging by the current cost of living crisis. This presents us with both challenges and opportunities that require us to adapt, innovate and build partnerships. Our focus is shifting towards earlier intervention in order to prevent youth homelessness before it happens.

We can only do this by taking a collaborative approach and would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank our partners who share our vision to end youth homelessness.



THE CHAIR'S MESSAGE

What a year this has been. I wonder, if like me, you're still wondering if some of the things we are experiencing are real? The scale of the challenges affecting all of us seem both confusing and relentless. This is especially the case for young people across the region who are increasingly in need of help and support to address their issues and achieve their potential. And for Nightstop, this has meant that it has become even more important that we are prepared and ready to go for every young person that comes our way.

Just over 2 years ago, we embarked on a process of developing both our 3 Year Strategic Plan as well as seeking to identify the organisational values that underpin who we are at Wyre Forest & South Worcestershire Nightstop. We began by spending time with listening to our team members, young people, and hosts to find out from them what they really thought the values of our organisation were. Following a series of workshops, many cups of coffee and plenty of post-it notes, the values began to emerge. As often with a process like this, the words were no surprise, however there was something special about seeing them come to life.

As we look ahead to 2023, we know that it will be a combination of both our Strategic Plan and our Values that will guide us through the challenges ahead. Building upon on the strong relationships that we have with our partners across the region, whilst seeking to develop new ones, will become increasingly more important.

Since coming into the role as Chair earlier this year, I've been able to see how our Values have become integrated into all aspects of Nightstop. I feel incredibly fortunate that I'm able to work alongside the most incredible people who genuinely care about what they do, sleeves rolled up, prepared and ready to go for our young people.



“WE NEED TO WORK CLOSER TOGETHER TO UNDERSTAND THE MULTIPLE ROOT CAUSES THAT LEAD TO YOUTH HOMELESSNESS AND THEN ESTABLISH JOINED UP PLANS TO ADDRESS EACH AND EVERY ONE OF THEM.”

Thank you to everyone that has supported Nightstop this year. Here's to doing more in 2023.

Darren Turner
Chair





THE CHIEF EXEC'S MESSAGE

As always the end of a year offers a time to reflect. This has been a year when the needs for our services was very evident. Young people have been faced with many challenges that impact their mental health. We see this in our work in schools, the demand for Nightstop placements and the increase in referrals to our mediation services.

We believe that positive relationships are the foundation for a healthy independence. These are sadly absent from the lives of many of the young persons who come to us. We work to address this with mediation to repair fractured relationships, conflict coaching sessions which provide the tools for young people to maintain and develop relationships and where necessary the crisis support we provide through accommodation with a host. Without our amazing hosts we could not offer this safe space to those young people who find themselves without a roof over their head. The hosts don't just provide emergency accommodation they offer hope that things will be different and create a warm and welcome environment for a young person who is often facing uncertainty and chaos in other areas of their life. We are hugely grateful to our volunteers for all they do to help make such a difference.

Following a visit from the High Sheriff of Worcestershire – Andrew Manning-Cox we were very proud to be recognised for our work with the High Sheriff's Award. At this event we said 'Goodbye' to Denise Carson who has been a Trustee and latterly Chair of Trustees at Nightstop since 2005. The legacy Denise leaves is huge and I would like to thank her for all she has done, and continues to do, to highlight the needs of those who have experienced disadvantage.

As we said goodbye to Denise we welcomed Darren Turner as our Chair of Trustees and Stef Stanesby and Tom Leavesley-Matthews as new Trustees. They all offer a wealth of skills and experience to guide the charity and we are very fortunate to have such a dynamic Board as we continue to develop our services and expand our work across the South of Worcestershire and Wyre Forest.

The support we receive from the community continues to grow and we now have a number of businesses offering help in different ways. If this is something that interests your business please get in touch to find out more about us and how you could get involved. I mentioned earlier that positive relationships are key and we are very proud of the relationships we have developed with our partners in the Wyre Forest, Worcester and Wychavon local authorities as well as those in the voluntary sector. We won't end youth homelessness on our own but the impact we can have when we work together is phenomenal.

“POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS ARE THE FOUNDATION FOR A HEALTHY INDEPENDENCE. THESE ARE SADLY ABSENT FROM THE LIVES OF MANY OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE WHO COME TO US.”

Judith Ford
CEO

CASE STUDY. EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION. HARRY, AGED 19.

Harry, a 19-year-old vulnerable young adult, had been sofa surfing for around three years and had also spent time rough sleeping in Worcester following difficulties in their family home. Due to conflict with their stepfather and older brother, Harry had been unable to remain at home. They had also been greatly impacted by the diagnosis of their mum's cancer.

Following bad experiences with agencies as a child, as well as suffering from anxiety, Harry was hesitant to seek help with their situation sooner. However, they contacted housing which was able to support Harry in placing them in emergency short-term accommodation in a shared B&B.

While in the shared accommodation, concerns were identified around Harry's safety and wellbeing, leading to Nightstop being approached for further support. It was then decided to offer Harry a night-by-night placement with Nightstop with our experienced hosts whilst they waited for his move into a young person-specific accommodation.

The improvement in Harry's confidence and attitude since beginning their Nightstop placement has been noted by both the hosts and the team. While in placement, Harry has volunteered their time to help the Nightstop hosts with Foodbank tasks and in the local community centre, as well as signing up for our Life Skills Award.

As a result of their placement, Harry appears much more motivated and seems to be making more positive choices about how they spend their time. They have also begun to speak about their aspirations for his future regarding possible courses and employment opportunities.

Through Mitch's Benevolent Fund, Harry was given some new trainers and clothes, which they were overjoyed with. They expressed that the generosity shown by Mitch's family and friends was incredible, and they did not feel they deserved it. Harry said that their experience with Nightstop has been incredibly positive, and they thanked the team for giving them a safe place to stay and for the support they had received.

341 **21**

Number of bed nights

Young people placed with hosts



“YOU HAVE HELPED ME OUT MASSIVELY. I HAVE ONLY GOT THIS FAR DUE TO YOUR LOTS OF HELP WHICH I APPRECIATE LOADS.”

CASE STUDY. MEDIATION. BEN, AGED 12.



The model pictured is for illustrative purposes only.

Ben, who was 12 years old, had moved up to high school during the pandemic, and during this period, there were several changes happening at home.

Ben was finding high school challenging. He couldn't concentrate, he regularly became angry, and, following some incidents, he was given exclusions. His anger and aggression would also emerge at home and in relationships between family members, which regularly led to arguments.

Ben was working with various professionals to try and help him navigate his issues at school. However, Ben's mum, Sharon, and stepdad, Martin, felt they were struggling to cope at home with no support. One of the professionals working with Ben suggested family mediation might help improve how everyone communicated with each other at home and told Sharon about Nightstop.

"IT WAS THE SPACE WE NEEDED TO TALK OPENLY ABOUT THINGS AND HAVE THE SUPPORT WE NEEDED. CALMED SITUATION DOWN MEANT NO ONE FELT GANGED UP ON, AND WE ALL COULD DISCUSS OUR FEELINGS BETTER."

During their initial individual session with each family member, Nightstop explored their key issues, what was happening for them and how they would like things to change going forward. Subsequent sessions used conflict coaching to equip each family member with tools and strategies to increase positive communication and reduce conflict at home.

The family then came together for a joint session which involved them exploring realistic and fair solutions that they could implement. It was encouraging to see that they were all beginning to put into practice the communication strategies they had learnt from conflict coaching, and they were already feeling the benefit of more constructive conversations taking place.

As a result, this made it much easier for them to discuss their agenda calmly and agree on solutions.

"THINGS ARE IMPROVING, ESPECIALLY WITH FRIENDS AND COMMUNICATION. I ENJOYED TALKING, LEARNING ABOUT NEW STRATEGIES, AND LEARNING WHY I FEEL LIKE THIS. IT'S ALL BEEN REALLY HELPFUL."

The family now feel that they can communicate with fewer arguments, and the relationship between them all is much better. Sharon and Martin have also noticed that Ben's anger and behaviour at home and at school have really improved.

"WE NEEDED HELP WITH CONFLICT WITHIN OUR HOUSEHOLD...MEDIATION HAS HELPED. IT'S MADE US ALL REALISE WE HAVE FAULTS AND HOW WE CAN APPRECIATE EACH OTHER'S VIEWS WITHOUT ALWAYS ENDING IN ARGUMENTS...I THINK THIS IS AN EXCELLENT SERVICE AND DEFINITELY DESERVES MORE FUNDING TO BE ABLE TO HELP MORE PEOPLE."

378

Mediation sessions

125

Young people and parent/carers receiving mediation

MITCH'S BENEVOLENT FUND

Mitch Pomfret was a Trustee at Wyre Forest and South Worcestershire Nightstop and Mediation Service for three years. He came to us as part of a development programme with Lloyds Bank.

Mitch was passionate about helping to make a difference in the lives of young people and helping to empower them to help create a better future.

Sadly, Mitch died suddenly in January 2022. His family were keen that his support for the charity continued as they knew how much it meant to him. To this end, we have created the Mitch Benevolent Fund, which is supported by donations from Mitch's friends and family. The examples below illustrate the difference this has made to the lives of some of the young people who come to Wyre Forest and South Worcestershire Nightstop and Mediation Service.

How Mitch's benevolent fund has helped to make a difference

Will was 13 years old and angry, hanging out with the wrong crowd and getting into trouble with the police outside of school. He was easily swayed by his peers, some of whom were involved on the periphery of county lines activity. Will knew that this was dangerous and had the desire to pull away but was worried about the consequences.

Will was also getting angry at school, arguing with teachers, and getting into fights. His teachers referred him for weekly conflict coaching sessions through our mediation service. He had very low self-esteem despite appearing 'confident' to his peers, so through conflict coaching, he was able to address this while exploring what was beneath his anger.

Will began to understand that his desire for safety was greater than his fear of pulling back. He also identified the impact of making changes to his friendship group and began to see that he had the agency for change. However, he was worried about the upcoming summer holidays, where he felt he may get drawn into 'stuff' again.

"IF YOU ARE CONSIDERING MEDIATION, I WOULD GO BECAUSE IT HAS HELPED ME SO MUCH WITH MY MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH. ONCE I JOINED MEDIATION I AUTOMATICALLY FELT LIKE I HAD SOMEONE TO SPEAK TO."

Mitch's Benevolent Fund supported Will in accessing sports lessons during the summer holidays. This kept him safe and was a big boost for his emotional and physical wellbeing. The sports provider encouraged him to stay out of trouble, and Will understood that his lessons would be revoked if something happened.

After the holidays, Will was able to tell us he had stayed out of trouble over the last few weeks and that the lessons had made a big difference in helping him keep on the right track. With the support of conflict coaching and Mitch's Fund, he is now on a safer path for his future.



"I AM STAYING OUT OF TROUBLE AND MAKING MORE POSITIVE FRIENDSHIP CHOICES. THE SESSIONS HAVE REALLY HELPED ME. I FEEL BETTER ABOUT MYSELF."

Crisis Support with Emergency Accommodation

Tom was 19 and living at a residential college for the partially sighted due to being registered blind. He is on the Autistic Spectrum. His full-time wrap-around residential support had come to an end due to his age, and family members were unwilling for him to live at home. Whilst his social worker tried to secure more suitable accommodation, Tom was able to stay with a volunteer host for a few weeks. He was visibly anxious and stressed about being homeless, so college staff referred Tom to Nightstop, who was able to provide intensive support to ensure his needs continued to be met during this time. This included financial support as Tom was unable to access his PIP payment and other benefits.

Nightstop provided day stops to Tom and continued crisis support, which involved assisting him to go to the supermarket and acting as an advocate whilst resolving financial and housing issues with other agencies. With help from the team, Tom was able to apply for Universal Credit and Housing Benefit, as well as successfully complete his Tenancy award.

After accessing Nightstop services for four and a half months, Tom moved into supported accommodation. He is grateful for the support Nightstop provided and expressed that without this intervention, he would still be trying to resolve his homelessness. Tom acknowledged that the team had gone above and beyond for him and hopes to give back to others by volunteering for Nightstop in the future.

“MY EXPERIENCE HAS BEEN POSITIVE, AND THE TEAM AT NIGHTSTOP HAVE BEEN VERY HELPFUL, AND I HAVE GOTTEN TO WHERE I AM VERY QUICKLY BECAUSE OF NIGHTSTOP. THE HOST WAS A VERY NICE PERSON, AND I ENJOYED STAYING WITH THEM.”

Worcestershire Adult Social Service, who supported Tom in securing his accommodation, added:

“IN ADDITION TO THE PRACTICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDED, INCLUDING ARRANGING ITEMS OF FURNITURE FOR THEIR NEW ACCOMMODATION, AND TRANSPORT TO ASSIST WITH THEIR MOVE...THE EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT NIGHTSTOP PROVIDED WAS INVALUABLE TO TOM DUE TO THEIR VERY LOW MOOD.”

“ALSO INVALUABLE WAS THE ADDITIONAL CARE PROVIDED TO HIM WHILST HE WAS AWAITING CONFIRMATION OF HIS MOVING DATE, WHICH ENABLED HIM TO STAY AT NIGHTSTOP RATHER THAN A B&B.”

(Worcester Adult Social Care)



THE DIFFERENCE WE MAKE

Emergency accommodation

“THE HOSTS WERE REALLY NICE AND NIGHTSTOP PROVIDED THINGS FOR ME SUCH AS WASHING FACILITIES AND TOILETRIES WHICH WAS GREAT.”

“Nightstop have been a huge help to me. Teaching me how to budget my money, discussing tenancy’s, life skills and all the things I need to prepare me to move forward. Everyone was so supportive when things were hard for me. I’m so excited to have my first night in my new home.”

“Thank you I appreciate this all so much. You have all helped me out massively.”

Mediation / Conflict coaching

“Things are improving, especially with friends and communication. I enjoyed talking, learning about new strategies, learning why I feel like this. It’s all been really helpful.” CC Y/P

“Mediation helped me explain more things to my mum – it helped with communication” Mediation Y/P

“You have been a great support to my family, thank you. I knew you would help and I have found it very useful.” Mediation P/C

“Yes, do it. Get your emotions out.” CC Y/P

“If you are considering mediation I would go because it has helped me so much with my mental and physical health. Once I joined mediation I automatically felt like I had someone to speak to.” Mediation Y/P

“It’s been helpful, I know I can have some people to speak to when needed, it calms me down...It’s helpful, the [mediators] are kind and they listen to what you say.” CC Y/P

We analysed 51 case closure forms for our mediation service asking young people and their parent/carer to report any improvements to their situation following on from the support they received.

The outcomes are positive:

Improved home life	100%
Improved communication	100%
Improved your relationship with family or friends	100%
Improved emotional wellbeing	98%
Improved confidence	98%
Number that feel there is no way we could improve the service	94%

“I DON’T KNOW WHAT I WOULD DO WITHOUT THIS SERVICE TO HELP ME SPEAK WITH MY DAUGHTER, THERE WOULD BE NO-ONE ELSE HELPING IN THIS WAY.”

Preventing youth homelessness starts here

