

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE VCS IN WORCESTERSHIRE

HEADLINES

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought terrible experiences for those people directly affected by the illness itself and by its consequences. It has also disrupted society in ways never before experienced. However, as Charles Beard says, “when it is dark enough you can see the stars”. In Worcestershire we have been fortunate that thousands of stars have shone through the gloom of pandemic with a huge number of those stars in the Voluntary and Community Sector.

As a society we owe it to those who have suffered to not allow the light of those stars to be extinguished. Indeed, we have a once in a generation opportunity to build on what we have learned from this experience. One of the key lessons we have learned is that, if we are minded to act with determination, we can achieve great things.

The VCS is a major player in Worcestershire’s economy and is a key engine for social good. Its organisations are the glue that binds civil society together. It is therefore essential that it is protected from the financial and operational impact of the pandemic and supported in creating a better Worcestershire for us all.

Surveying the VCS in Worcestershire we discover:

7% - 14% reduction in confidence about future prospects for charities

18% expect income to fall by at least half.

78% increase in demand for VCS services during the pandemic

Charities plan significant **cost-cutting and extra fundraising** to bridge the gap.

Warning signs of a **financial cliff edge** in early 2021 because of a “perfect storm” in funding.

To combat a potential crisis in civil society we need to learn lessons from how we all raised our game to face the pandemic.

We need to:

- ⇒ Find new philanthropy in the County
- ⇒ Give practical support to help charities recover
- ⇒ Build on the new relationships and genuine collaborative working founded in the crisis
- ⇒ Exploit the step-change in digital solutions
- ⇒ Keep on monitoring the situation
- ⇒ Put real money on the table to make this happen

WORCESTERSHIRE VOICES

Supporting an independent and influential
Voluntary and Community Sector

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