

Appendix 1

Welfare Reform Working Together Group

Strategy and key priorities

The impact of government Welfare Reforms have been a key priority for the Coventry Partnership since 2013. The Welfare Reform Working Together Group (WRWTG) brought partners together to raise awareness of the impacts within the city and to work together to mitigate these where possible. (A list of current members is attached.)

Over the past two years, the group has worked to develop and clear and consistent messages around the reforms, helping to ensure that local people are made aware of the changes and that those directly impacted understood how they would be affected. This has included the production of leaflets around individual aspects of the reforms, such as Universal Credit, Sanctions and the Benefit Cap, alongside general information about where to get help and advice. The group has also run a series of events and 'pop-up' shops to highlight the changes. In addition, training sessions and discussion forums have been organised to ensure that partner organisations also understand the cumulative effects on the most vulnerable people in the city.

Over the past year, the WRWTG has refined its action plan and focused on its communication strategy. With the imminent launch of Universal Credit in Coventry (7th December), the key focus recently has been on the production of public information, training events and other awareness raising activities with partners.

WRWTG also seeks to engage with other agendas within the city. In particular, we maintain close links with the Employment, Skills and Financial Inclusion Network.

The main roles of the group are:

1. To provide a regular forum for reporting news, raising issues, discussing problems and identifying solutions with partners.
2. To agree and effect a Communication strategy and plan that delivers information on the changes occurring and suggesting actions so that those affected are better able to respond.
3. To agree actions across partners that will lead to mitigation of any negative effects and accentuates any positives. The intention will be that decisions and actions agreed together will have more impact than organisations working separately.
4. To coordinate work/analysis on the impacts of welfare reform and to evaluate findings with discussion and agreement on how this should affect our plans going forward.
5. To ensure that the City has a robust framework going forward and we are well placed with the introduction of Universal Credit.

Welfare Reform Working Together Group members - November 2015		
Members	Organisation	Job Title
Abigail Oddy	Whitefriars Housing	Service Manager, Rents
Alan Markey	Coventry Independent Advice Services	Director
Amanda Wilson	Ashram Moseley Housing Association	Income Manager
Anna Hollis	Midland Heart Housing Association	Operations Manager
Bernie Kelly	Whitefriars Housing	Area Service Manager
Emily Burn	Insight Team	Senior Analyst
Daksha Piparia	Coventry CAB	Head of Campaigns and Targeted Services
Dan Cubitt	DWP	Partnership Support
Dunleavy Mary JCP BTWT4	DWP	Partnership Manager
Ed Hodson	Coventry CAB	Research and Campaigns Coordinator
Francis Healy	Ashram Moseley Housing Association	Head of Locality
Karen Gist	Revs & Benefits Dept. CCC	Training and Appeals Manager
Rachael Hartopp	Revs & Benefits Dept. CCC	Housing and Council Tax Manager
James Harrison	Warwick University	Associate Professor
Janet Gurney	Coventry Law Centre	Benefits Advisor
Ayaz Maqsood	Housing Manager, CCC	Head of Housing Strategy
Kim Mawby	City Centre and Development Services	Employment Manager
Darren O'Shaughnessy	CCC	Communication Officer
Philip Monk	Coventry Law Centre	Solicitor
Tim Savill	Revs & Ben	Service Manager
Sophie Parkes	Coventry CAB	Campaigns and Communications Manager
Sue Bent	Coventry Law Centre	Director
Terri Lennon	Orbit Housing	Welfare Reform
Tim Coleman	RadioPlus	Station Master
Tim Rees	Community Development Worker	Foleshill Baptist Church
Tina Wukics	Partnership for Coventry	Support Officer
Wendy Eades	Warwick University	PhD Research Student