



Annual Review **2021**

hyh
Herts Young Homeless

Last year
we helped
2,098
people to improve
their lives



Introduction...

... from CEO for the Annual Report year ended 31 March 2021

Our 2021 Annual Report gives us the opportunity to reflect on an extraordinary year. I am hugely proud of the way that our organisation has responded to working in such a changed world. As a team, we have quickly adapted to new ways of working, moving many of our services onto digital platforms whilst continuing to work safely face to face when required. Huge thanks for the hard work and dedication of our team of staff and volunteers for making this transformation possible, supported by the robust stewardship provided by our trustees. All underpinned by the incredible support from our partners and the generosity of our supporters.

Concerned about the impact of the pandemic on our services and funding, we were incredibly fortunate to secure four significant grants from Homeless Link, The National Lottery Community Fund, The Rausing Trust and Garfield Weston Foundation, as well as a substantial unsolicited donation from a private donor. We were particularly grateful for the flexibility that these funders offered us, allowing us to put the funding towards our core costs which provided much needed financial security in such uncertain times.

Financially stable, the attention of our management team remained with our service users and the delivery of our services hasn't wavered. Operating both remotely and face to face, our dedicated staff team continued to support some of Hertfordshire's most vulnerable young people, delivering support to 2,098 young people in need in 20-21. In addition to our usual support, thanks to your generous donations we have supported our service users throughout the year with supermarket vouchers and care packages at a time when their resources were more limited than ever. We have also been able to provide our Live Life members with the necessary technology and data to stay connected, taking the Live Life meetings online, thanks to The National Lottery Community Fund, Welwyn Hatfield Community Inclusion Grant and Willmott Dixon.

After a successful pilot year, Crouchfield Trust have renewed their funding for our Targeted Outreach Worker until October 2023. This will enable us to continue offering a flexible family-focused approach to support on a young person's return to the family home.

At the start of the pandemic, our two new Intensive Outreach workers were initially seconded across to our Floating Support service demonstrating hyh's dynamic and flexible approach to support. From October 2020, the Service resumed and is now well underway; providing advice, guidance and support to vulnerable care leavers with a significant identified housing need.

In direct response to the growing demand for specialist homeless services, we are pleased to be introducing the following new roles for 21-22:

- Two Dual Diagnosis Outreach workers – working alongside Hertsmere and Broxbourne Borough Councils and Housing Association partners to engage difficult to reach individuals and families at risk of eviction due to mental health issues and substance misuse.
- Mental Health Accommodation Outreach worker – to ensure appropriate housing and post-discharge support is available to service users who are ready to be discharged from inpatient mental health wards.
- Rough Sleeping Outreach worker – to work with partner agencies and Hertsmere Borough Council to engage rough sleepers in Hertsmere and support them towards recovery and social stability.

Sadly, after 4 years, our partnership with Turning Point to provide Hertfordshire's Complex Needs Service, has come to an end. Our partnership staff will move across to Turning Point to continue to support people with a range of mental health, dual diagnosis and other complex needs to recover and live independently. Our thanks to both Turning Point and Herts Mind Network for the opportunity to work in partnership as one seamless and integrated service and team.

We have worked with Letchworth Heritage Foundation to provide support in Letchworth Garden City since 2005. Most recently, this has been in the form of a Tenancy Sustainment worker, supporting young people to stay in their homes by offering debt, career and benefits advice as well as help with family and relationship problems. We have repackaged our support in this area, but we will continue to be present and intend to assist the Foundation to understand the needs of young people and their families in Letchworth moving forward.

Our funding from The National Lottery Community Fund for our Live Life project came to an end in March 2021. We have taken the opportunity presented by a pause in funding to engage a third party to carry out an external evaluation of the project, to ensure that our ideas for its shape and strategy moving forward are in line with the expectations and desire of all our stakeholders. We continue to support our existing members while this process is carried out and we are excited to adapt the project to reflect our learning from the past two years.

Despite our initial concerns, we have also had an incredible year for Fundraising, particularly at the beginning of the pandemic when we reached out to you for support via our Crisis Appeal, in the Autumn via Big Give and at Christmas and New Year via our Winter Appeal. Thank you to our local community, we have been overwhelmed by your support.

Now, more than ever, we are reminded that we cannot stand still; we must be operationally resilient, financially stable and strategically proactive. Whilst we enter the third and final year of our three-year strategy for 2019-22, we also take on some new strategic goals to address our learning from the pandemic. After ending the 20-21 financial year with a surplus of

£211,075 and reserves of £547,887, we are in the fortunate position to be able to demonstrate our commitment to our strategy and resilience by creating three designated funds:

1. Digital & Data fund – to enable us to use our data to evaluate our impact and inform our strategy, directing our attention and resources to the service users and causes that need us most. It will also assist us to better connect with our supporters and other stakeholders.
2. Service continuity fund – to set aside funds that can be used in the event of unexpected funding shortfalls, protecting the delivery of our existing services.
3. Social value – we intend to review and invest in our approach to equality, diversity and inclusion to develop a more inclusive organisational culture and to launch our hyh-wide environmental ethos and policy.

Finally, we would like to express our thanks to the Board for their role in supporting the charity during these unprecedented times. Under the leadership of a new Chairman, the Board have embraced a new way of working and Lead Trustee roles that champion the charity's endeavours to ensure its strategic focus, resilience and good practice. We continue to use the Charity Governance Code as a tool to support continuous improvement and have identified the newly reworked and expanded principle of Equality Diversity Inclusion (EDI) as a focus for development in 21-22.

Helen Elliott

Helen Elliott
Chief Executive Officer
CEO



Introduction...

... from Chairman for the Annual Report year ended 31 March 2021

Chairman's Report

An extraordinary year, against the challenging backdrop of Covid-19, which spurred the best possible response from our staff, volunteers and supporters. The impact of the pandemic on young people was immense, exacerbating their vulnerabilities and increasing the risk of homelessness.

Our staff and volunteers responded by finding new ways to help young people, spending more time with them using online services, delivering food vouchers, channeling corporate support to supply used laptops and data packages. Our supporters also responded generously with donations of money and time.

Among many improvements made in the year we have developed our ICT infrastructure to work responsively and our plans are advanced for the opening of Future Roots which will provide supported accommodation for young people, aged 18 to 24 years old, to help the transition from homelessness to independent living.

You will find more details in the following pages. Herts Young Homeless will continue to innovate, and through education, mediation, advice and support will achieve life changing outcomes for young people who are homeless or at risk of becoming so.

May I finish by offering a warm thank you to our staff, volunteers and supporters for their extraordinary efforts in this extraordinary year and also to our Trustees who have been unstinting in the time they have given and the contributions they have made to the success of the charity.

Peter Holland

Peter Holland CBE DL
Chairman and Trustee



Vision, Mission & Values

hyh is an independent charity and has been supporting vulnerable people in Hertfordshire since 1998

Our Vision is:

Preventing Hertfordshire's homelessness together.

Our Mission is:

To prevent homelessness by empowering individuals to make positive, informed choices.

To support young people and their families, those in crisis and individuals at risk of becoming homeless.

hyh has identified four core values, and the behaviours these values promote. They set our baseline expectation of how we work together to achieve our mission and direct the way that we deliver services to our service users:

- We are **professional** – our trained, knowledgeable staff deliver services to the highest standard. We regularly review our practice to ensure we remain specialists within the sector. We are a respected and influential voice into the sector aiming to influence policy, commissioning and homeless provision.
- We are **passionate** – fully committed with a progressive, strengths-based approach. We uphold our integrity by openly offering realistic prevention choices that make a difference and equip our service users to avoid homelessness.
- We are **responsive** – we offer independent expertise and are uniquely positioned to prevent homelessness. We continuously look for innovative ways to develop our capacity to meet the needs of our service users, the public and local community, both now and in the future.
- We are **collaborative** – sharing, partnering and co-producing with service users, commissioners and other stakeholders. All voices are heard, opinions sought and opportunities of working together welcomed. We welcome and explore any new opportunities to collaborate, sharing skills and expertise to provide best outcomes for our service users.

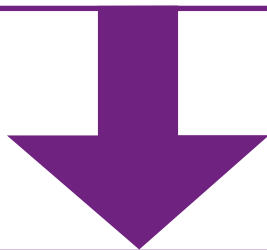


Our Strategic Priorities

In 2019 the Trustees and hyh team compiled a **three year strategy for 2019-2022**
This identifies three key strategic aims which **hyh** must meet in order to achieve our overall vision of **'preventing Hertfordshire's homelessness together'**

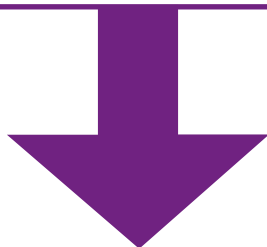
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To increase the **availability of services in our three priority areas** of
a) prevention/early intervention,
b) crisis intervention and
c) independent living support;



2

To **ensure resilience and sustainability** of the organisation, in particular by increasing the proportion of unrestricted funding and by investing in our core infrastructure and staff skill base;



3

To **provide an informed and authoritative voice in the sector**, in order to constructively influence decision makers, particularly around the difficulties affecting our service users.

1. Priority Service Areas

Principal activities

Our principal activities are to provide a free county-wide service dealing with the problems of housing and homelessness by supplying specialist services for vulnerable young people in Hertfordshire as well as services for adults who have mental health and housing issues. We deliver this throughout Hertfordshire through our services:

In 2020-1, all of the services we delivered targeted at least one of these areas;

A) Prevention and early intervention Education, Homeless Hub, Mediation

We want to enable more young people to remain living with their families. Our services will work to reduce the occurrence of youth homelessness in Hertfordshire.



B) Crisis intervention Health, Homeless Hub

We want to be able to provide crisis support in relation to housing free at the point of need. We will do this using our numerous partnerships across the county, that enable hyh to offer a fast and effective response to people threatened with or experiencing homelessness.



C) Independent living support Health, Floating Support, Live Life

We want to empower individuals to make their own choices and live independently, helping them to avoid rent arrears and other behavioural, health and social issues which often lead to tenancy failure.



Education



Our interactive sessions **funded by Local Authorities** and **individual grants**, focused on training across secondary schools in Hertfordshire, aim to **prevent youth homelessness** by informing young people of where they can get help and support when experiencing difficulty. We offer face to face and virtual sessions that focus on the topics of homelessness, leaving home, independent living, managing conflict and healthy relationships.

The pandemic and its impact on schools has meant that we have adapted our service to provide more **online learning materials and sessions via video link**. We have created new online learning packs and service user story videos.

“That was a superb session, thanks: engaging, thought provoking and perfectly delivered. Our students are pretty shy and I could see lots of thinking and questioning as I wandered their rooms too.”

“The virtual session you delivered for us this year was stunning and the feedback, both formal and informal was excellent. They were all moved and engaged by the speaker who had experienced homelessness and staff remarked on his confidence and willingness to answer questions that were raised.”



Mediation



Funded by The Henry Smith Charity, hyh run a confidential and impartial service for young people and their families where conflict is causing difficulty. Our mediators help young people and their parents/carers/guardians work together to build better relationships with each other. Where possible, we aim to prevent family breakdown.

97%

of those using our U16s
service reported having a better family relationship
and increased self-esteem and confidence

"I liked having a
space where we
could both talk
openly"

"I was surprised
by how quickly
I noticed an
impact on our
relationship
after starting the
sessions. We
enjoy spending
time with each
other again"



Mediation



91%

of under 16s returned
to or remained in the
family home



76%

of families reported better
relationships



75%

of young people reported
increased self-esteem
and confidence

78

families were supported,
plus Mediation support was also provided
to the families of those accessing our Homeless Hub



Homeless Hub



Funded by Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) – **hyh** work in partnership with One YMCA to deliver this service. The Homeless Hub acts as a ‘front door’ to homeless prevention services. **We prioritise 16 & 17 year olds** and aim to enable families/carers with young people to stay together by working intensively with them before the point of crisis and with those already in crisis in order **to prevent homelessness**.

We provide advice to young people and family members experiencing housing difficulties or requiring general advice.

Where possible, we will use mediation to support the prevention of a homeless situation by supporting the young person and their family to reconcile differences and ensure all necessary support is put in place.

462

number of young people referred

“We really appreciate your help and support for our family today - we’re very impressed and grateful”

“I know I’m not the easiest person to work with but really appreciate your help in securing my new accommodation”



Homeless Hub



We saw a



69%

increase in communication
with the family



68%

increase in positive
behaviour from the
young person



91%

were prevented from
needing to access Local
Authority Children Services



90%

were prevented
from making a
homeless application

Our targeted Outreach worker also supported

46

individuals and their families

“Thank you for all
the information
and support
you’re offering
and for listening
to my concerns”



Case Study: Chloe's Story



Chloe was referred to the Homeless Hub at **hyh** by her college after they discovered that she was sofa surfing with a friend.

Chloe was sofa surfing as she was experiencing ongoing and continuous conflict with her Mum during the lockdown. Due to her college being closed and her Mum no longer being able to work, both Chloe and her Mum were at home together all the time causing tension.

As the lockdown restrictions came into place, Chloe was no longer able to sofa surf with her friend and as it wasn't appropriate for her to go to different houses each day, she was referred into temporary accommodation via her local housing authority after speaking with our Homeless Hub team.

Chloe only had a small bag of her clothes when she left but we were able to provide her with food vouchers and a starter pack. This ensured that whilst she was temporarily living somewhere out of her area, she was able to use items in the pack to feel more settled and help her get by as she was not yet receiving Universal Credit. Chloe is now living in permanent accommodation and is looking to the future, continuing her studies at college.



Floating Support



Funded by Hertfordshire County Council and delivered in partnership with Catalyst Housing; housing related support is offered to 18-24 year old care leavers who are moving into independent accommodation or are in accommodation and require support to maintain this.



288

individuals supported

"I don't think I would be here if I hadn't got support from hyh"



86%

of those supported maintained independent living

"Herts Young Homeless helped me to get everything I needed for my flat and supported me with setting up bills and budgeting."

Improvement in young people as captured from hyh staff reports:

77%

Drug & Alcohol Misuse



89%

Physical Health

89%

Emotional & Mental Health



92%

Self-care

Case Study: Amir's story



Amir arrived in Hertfordshire as a refugee escaping conflict in his own country.

Although he had his own property, he had little understanding of how to set up utility bills or his benefits and was referred to Herts Young Homeless for support. His Floating Support worker, Charlotte worked closely with Amir for three months. Charlotte started by doing some budgeting with Amir so that he was more aware of what he had to pay and when and how much he had left over. Charlotte got in touch with a local charity to source some furniture for his flat and was able to get him a sofa, dining table and chairs, coffee table and chest of drawers.

Unfortunately Amir's Universal Credit payments were delayed, leaving him with almost no money. In the meantime, Charlotte was able to refer Amir to the Food Bank for emergency food parcels whilst she chased up the benefit payments for him. Amir is now feeling more settled and knows that Charlotte is there to offer him continued support.





We support service users with a range of mental health issues.

In partnership with local agencies, we work to resolve housing matters and support access to long-term recovery for mental health and substance misuse problems.

Complex Needs Service

We were a delivery partner in the Hertfordshire Complex Needs service with Turning Point and Herts Mind Network, funded by Hertfordshire County Council.

Supported
624
people

Dual Diagnosis Family Link Worker

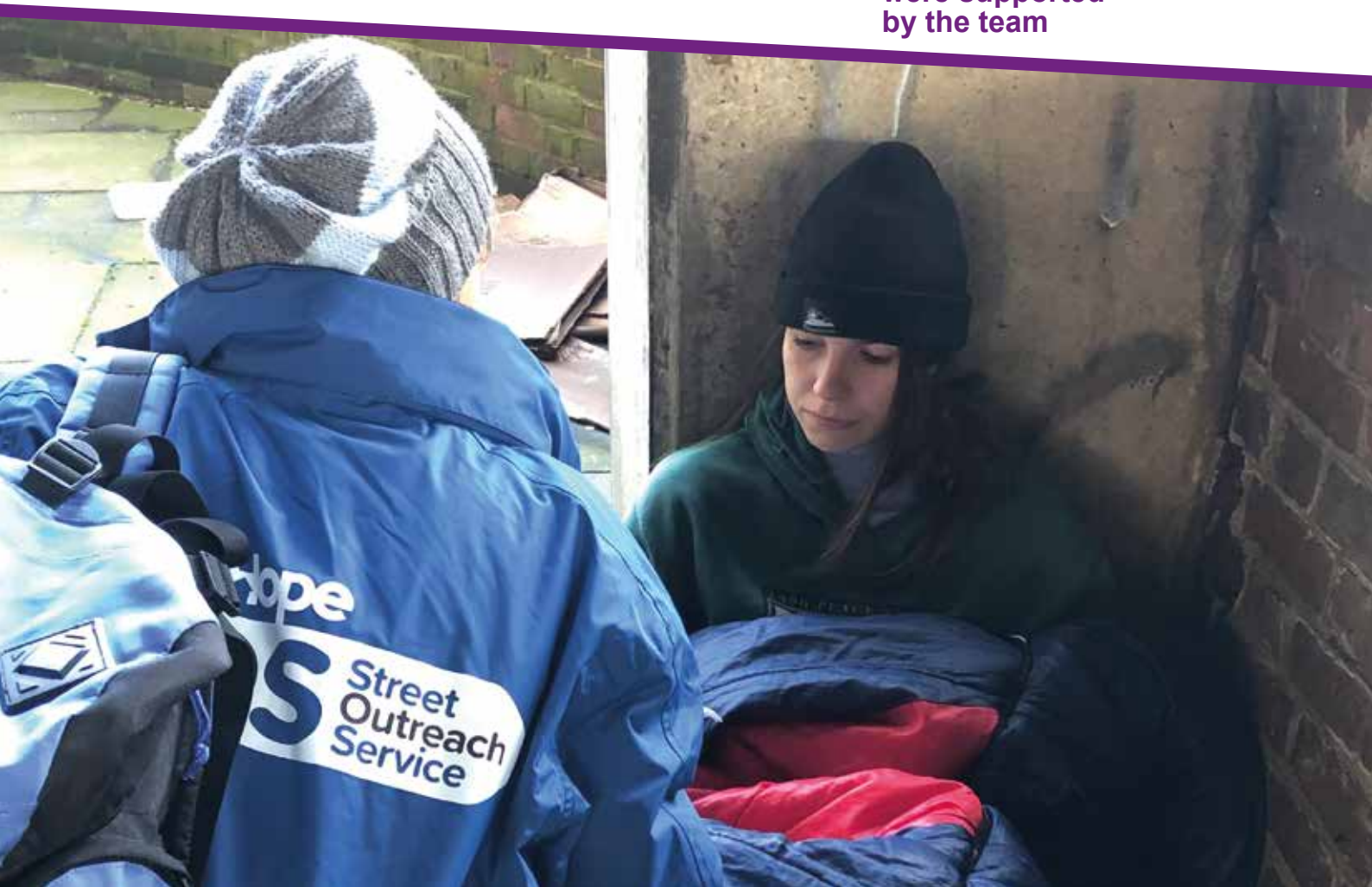
Dual Diagnosis Family Link Worker
Funded by Children In Need, our worker supports young people and their families to access and engage with our Mediation service

Supported
28
families

Rough Sleeping Intervention Dual Diagnoses Link Worker

We are part of a specialist intervention team with New Hope, CGL and Citizens Advice, working to reduce the number of rough sleepers in Watford. This is funded by the UK Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

109
individuals
were supported
by the team



Live Life



Live Life is a youth led project for young people who have experienced homelessness. Live Life supports young people by gaining access to activities, training, work experience and volunteering opportunities, giving young people the ability to improve their confidence, as well as their CV, and turn their homeless experience into something positive.

Our Live Life service is currently being evaluated; we have recently introduced a dedicated Support Worker to work alongside the project team and other ideas to increase the impact of the service are also being explored.

Live Life

now has a total of

43

members

"I've been able to grow in confidence and be part of a group of like minded young people"



2. Organisational resilience & sustainability

Despite the challenges of COVID-19 hyh had an incredible year for fundraising with increased individual giving as well as additional Grants and Trusts funding.

In direct response to the growing demand for specialist homeless services, we continue to work proactively with our Commissioners and other stakeholders securing additional funding to introduce new roles that will help engage difficult to reach individuals and families at risk of eviction.

The success of the year has helped ensure that **hyh** has the financial resources in 2021/22 to weather the continued impact of the pandemic, remain operationally resilient and ensure the services we provide are not threatened..

Now more than ever, we want to ensure that **hyh** has the right infrastructure for the future and have taken on some new strategic goals to address our learning from the pandemic. Part of the financial surplus made in 2021/22 has already been invested in our ICT infrastructure and we have created three designated funds, Digital and Data, Service Continuity and Social Value. These funds demonstrate our commitment to investing in forward strategy as we seek to evaluate our impact, and pivot to adapting our services and fundraising in response to COVID-19.



3. An informed and authoritative voice

hyh want to provide an informed and authoritative voice in the sector, in order to **constructively influence decision makers**, particularly around the difficulties affecting service users that occur as a result of short-term decision making by statutory agencies.

In 2020/21 we have:

Continued to engage with commissioning and statutory bodies, highlighting gaps in provision and working closely with them to scope out service options.

Continued our partnership working within the Hertfordshire Homeless Alliance to increase our voice in the county and demonstrate our collective social impact on the residents of Hertfordshire.

Shared experiences from our user-led Live Life project to inform homelessness policy.



Our busiest areas

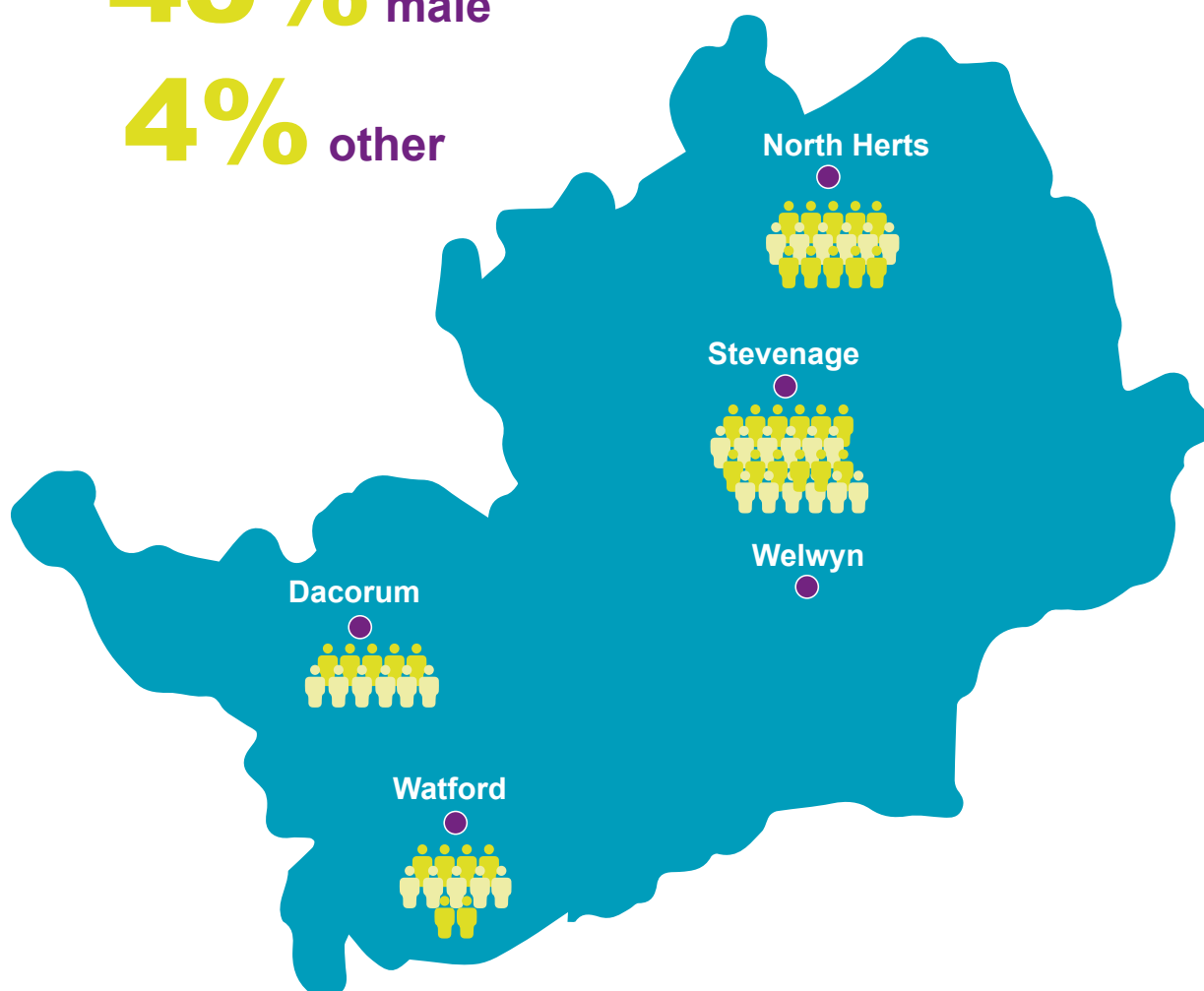
We have supported **2,098** vulnerable people in the last year and our busiest areas are **Stevenage**, **North Herts**, **Watford** and **Dacorum**.

The people we helped:

53% female

43% male

4% other



Fundraising

We are proud to be supported by some fantastic foundations, corporate partners, community organisations, schools, faith groups, **hyh** staff and individuals across the county. We are pleased to confirm that we have not received any complaints during this year about our fundraising activities. Funds have been raised for us through events and virtual events including sponsored walks, runs, climbs, rows and sleepouts, dress down days, quiz nights, music and bake sales. We would love to hear from anyone who would like to get involved in fundraising for us marketing@hyh.org.uk



hyh Golf Day at Shendish Manor



Golf Day at Shendish Manor Golf Club,
raised

£4,350

Sleepout at Home,
raised

£26,500



The Big Herts Quiz/Bingo, raised

£5,768



The Big Give, raised

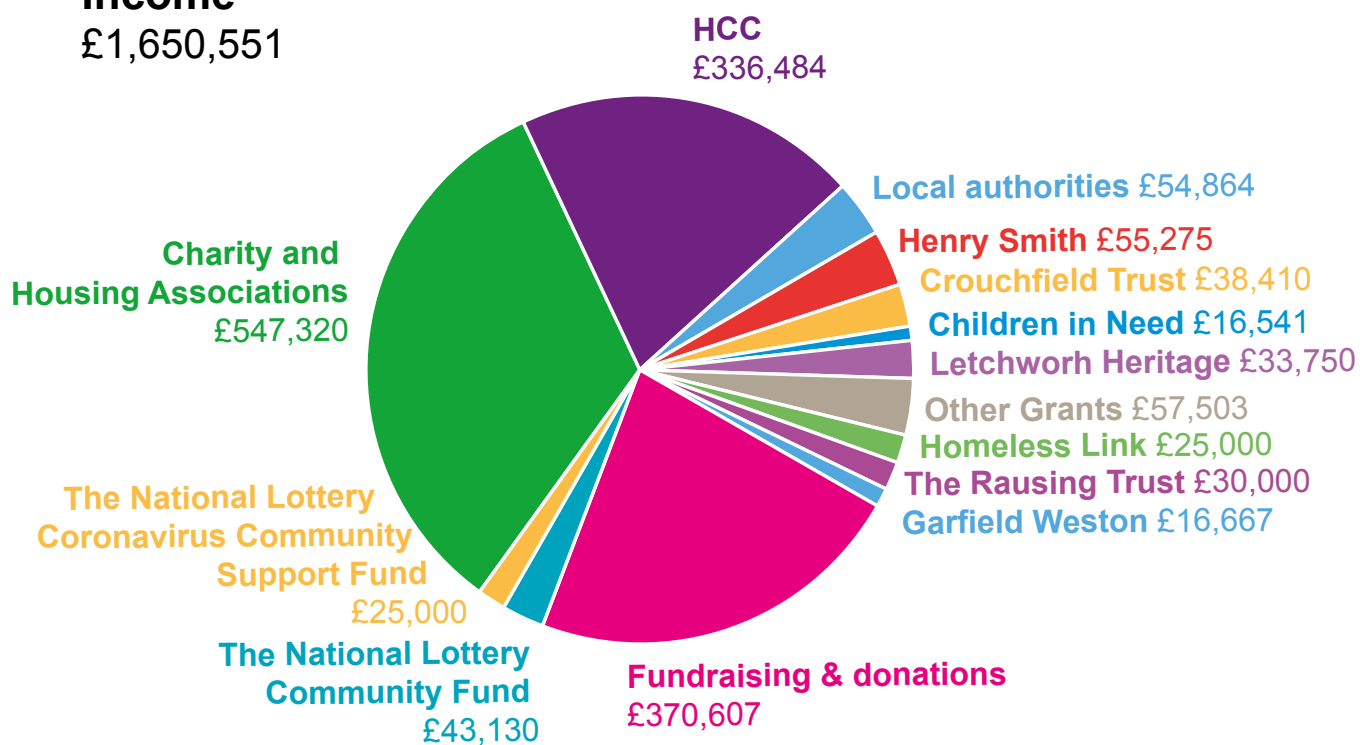
£19,027



Our Finances

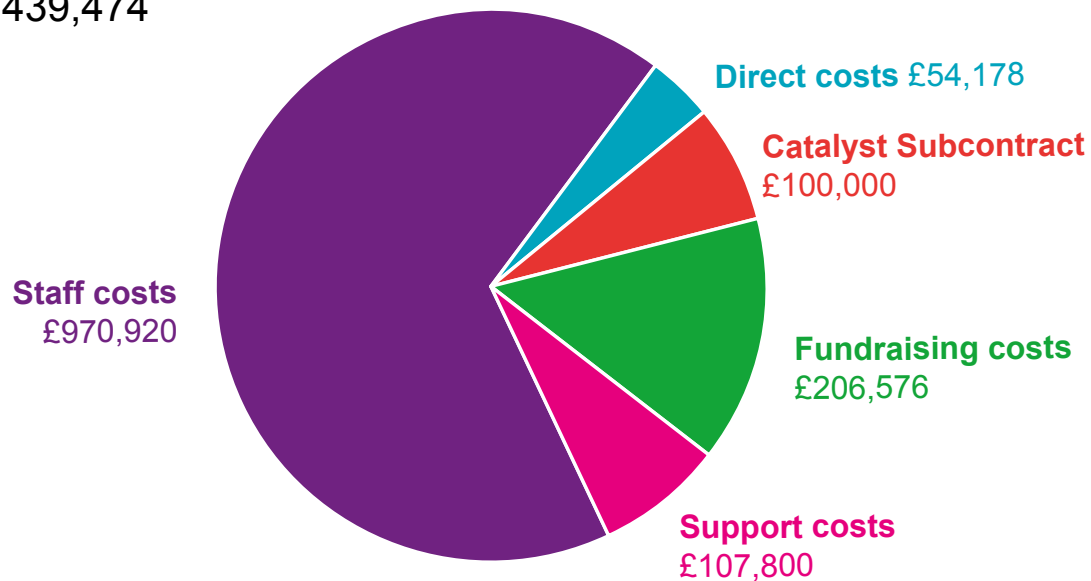
Income

£1,650,551



Costs

£1,439,474



Thank you

We rely on the generosity of our funders to maintain our services. We would like to offer our heartfelt thanks to our funders and everyone who has generously donated or fundraised for us, as well as the incredible volunteers who willingly offer their time and skills to support the running of our services throughout the year.



Friends of hyh

We're a sociable group who fundraise, organise events and work to raise the charity's profile in the local community. The funds we raise are used to provide white goods, furniture, mattresses or other essential items for young people when they move into new accommodation. If you're interested in joining us, please contact friends@hyh.org.uk

**Making a
difference to
local young
people**





Herts Young Homeless

Contact us

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