

# Annual Review 2022



Herts Young Homeless

Contact us

03333 202 384 · [www.hyh.org.uk](http://www.hyh.org.uk)

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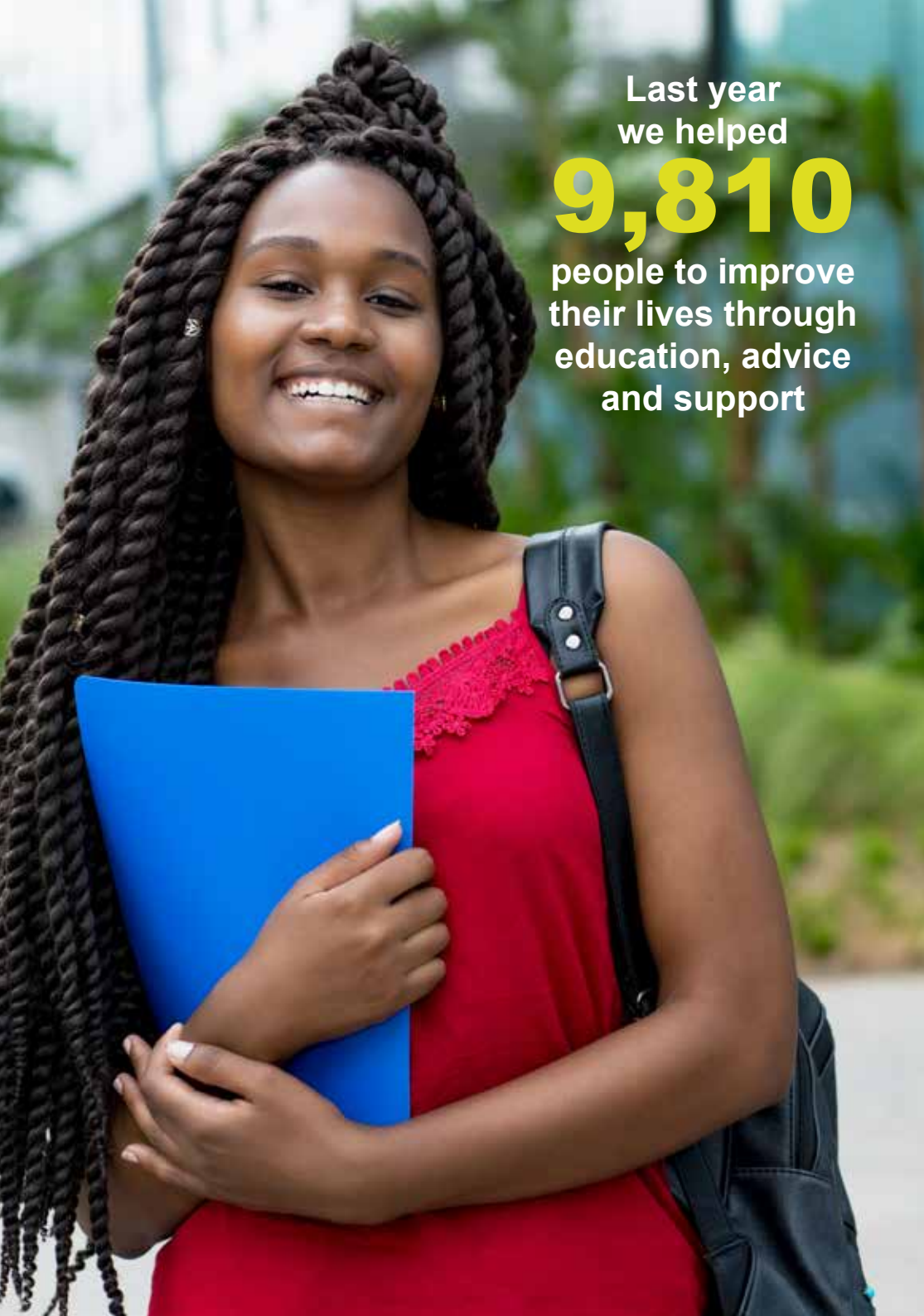
Head Office

1st Floor · Gracemead House · Woods Avenue · Hatfield · Herts AL10 8HX

Registered charity number 1069498

A Company limited by Guarantee Number: 3525558





Last year  
we helped  
**9,810**  
people to improve  
their lives through  
education, advice  
and support

## Overview from our CEO for the year ended 31 March 2022

I was thrilled to start as CEO in January 2022, joining a brilliant team and a very supportive board of trustees. I had a great handover from my predecessor, Helen Elliott, who I want to pay tribute to for her leadership of Herts Young Homeless (**hyh**) over the previous five or so years. She left me a really strong legacy and, having been CEO for three quarters of 2021/22, most of this year's annual report and accounts are a testament to Helen's leadership.

Life for young people continues to be hugely challenging. The impact of the pandemic, especially on people's mental health, and more recently, the ever-rising cost of living, have made it harder for many young people to thrive and build the independent life they want and deserve. As a result, **hyh**'s support, advice and education programmes have never been more needed.

I am immensely proud of the hard work and dedication of our staff and volunteers. They have responded amazingly to the challenges and the uncertainties that both the pandemic and the cost of living crisis have brought. The **hyh** team has continued to provide a full range of services to an excellent standard whilst also updating and improving what we do and the way we do it. They have continued to marry up passion and professionalism every step of the way.

I also want to pay tribute to our many partners. We could not have achieved the amazing results we did in 2021/22, on our own so thank you for walking alongside us and the young people we work with. There are hundreds of colleagues we have worked with last year in dozens of other brilliant charities and social enterprises,

in the county council and the ten districts across Hertfordshire, schools, colleges and youth groups, and with partners and supporters in companies and businesses across the county. They have all helped us achieve the results we did last year.

2021/22 was a year of change for everyone at **hyh**:

- The team started the year online, in Zoom and Teams meetings, and ended it working face to face again. Moving back to the office brought its challenges – as it did for almost every other organisation out there – but it was also joyful to see people reconnecting again.
- **hyh** recruited a new Chief Executive Officer; always a lengthy process and one that can be unsettling for the team.
- We reviewed the structure of our core services and looked at how they are managed, how they are staffed and how they fit with each other.
- We launched our new Future Roots house in Welwyn Garden City. As with any innovation project, the set-up was time consuming, obstacle-laden and stressful at times. But seeing four young people move into and benefit from living in a very supportive and welcoming environment has been fantastic.
- Our education team finally moved back to a pretty much full programme of face to face sessions after two years of pandemic disruption. Feedback from young people has been at sky-high levels of positivity and teachers have welcomed the full range of courses we provide.
- We began the long journey of improving our digital offering, developing a web chat

service that we hope to go live with in early spring 2023.

- We also took a serious look at how we can do better around equality, diversity and inclusion and used a programme of work with both staff and trustees to lay the foundations for our next strategy.
- The contracts for both the Homeless Hub for 16-17 year olds and our Floating Support service for young people aged 18+ came to an end and were put out for re-tender. We were thrilled to hear in June 2022 that we had won both contracts for a further five years. This gives us a very strong foundation for how we can support even more young people in the years ahead.
- We struggled to keep our Live Life service afloat. It was something we had been hugely proud of in previous years but like so many other charities have experienced around the country, this project, aimed at engaging young people was badly hit by the pandemic. As a result we took the decision to put it on hold and to revisit its aims and objectives as part of our strategy review.

As noted in the Financial Review, a number of one-off factors during the year helped us finish the period in a strong financial position. This financial position means we are able to plan for the future and invest in



our new strategy so that we can support more young people.

One of my first tasks as CEO has been to lead the work on developing a new strategy for **hyh**. This work had been delayed until I arrived and since January has been, quite rightly, a big focus for the trustees as well as for our staff. We are reviewing our vision, mission and values as well as our longer term strategy and will finalise and launch those in autumn 2022.

Meanwhile, we are not standing still. We are building on our successes in 2021/22 with a series of new developments this year, including:

- Extending our under-16s mediation service: we have added an additional mediator to our team to help reduce the waiting list.
- Launching a new web chat service for young people aged 18+.
- Enhancing our mental health and counselling support, including piloting an in-house counsellor.
- Growing our fundraising activity and income by developing our individual giving and investing more in corporate partnerships.
- Investing more in our staff, including offering an updated training package and various wellbeing initiatives

Finally I would like to thank Peter, Carol and the rest of the Board of Trustees for everything they do for **hyh** and for stewarding the charity over the difficult last few years. We have some great times ahead of us I'm sure.

Thank you for being part of our journey to improve the lives of young people facing homelessness in Hertfordshire!

*Jonny Whitehead*

**Jonny Whitehead**  
Chief Executive Officer

## Report from our Chairman for the year ended 31 March 2022

I feel very proud of what Herts Young homeless has achieved in what has been yet another tough year for young people and their families.

Our staff have continued to deliver a range of excellent services across the early intervention, crisis support and independent living portfolios. I am especially delighted that we launched the new Future Roots house: many people have been involved in making this happen and I would like to thank Barry Stillerman for his vision and drive in helping us bring it to life.

We remain in a solid financial position as a charity which, given the uncertainty in the world around us, gives me great comfort. Meanwhile, the renewal of our contracts with Hertfordshire County Council gives us the long term stability from which we can grow, innovate and expand our services for young people and their families.

We now have a great platform from which to finalise and launch our new strategy for the coming few years and our plans to work with more young people and to do so in an ever-better way. These will build on the foundations we have been putting in place this year and should enable us to improve our digital offering, become more inclusive,

continue to try out new approaches and services and, above all, see more young people involved in our organisation.

As ever I want to pay tribute to the dedication and commitment shown by my fellow Trustees. They have all focused on specific areas of **hyh**'s business and have given advice, guidance and support to the staff and volunteers in each area. I want to say thank you to Jason Hale who stepped down as Treasurer in March 2022 and to Gilmar Querios who left us in May 2022. Both of them made an important contribution to the charity and will be missed. I am delighted to welcome Tim Willies as our new Treasurer. Tim joined the Board in February and has made a huge impact already.

Finally, I would like to offer my thanks, and that of my fellow Trustees to the staff, volunteers and supporters of **hyh** without whom none of our amazing work would be possible.

*Peter Holland*

**Peter Holland**  
Chairman and Trustee



## Vision, Mission & Values 2019-22

This annual report refers throughout to the vision, mission, values and strategy that applied during 2021-22. Please check back at [hyh.org.uk](http://hyh.org.uk) for updates.

### 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

### our values

#### 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 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 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 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 2019-22

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'**

1

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.

## Priority Service Areas

### Principal activities

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

In 2021-2, 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 are funded by **Local Authorities** and **individual grants** focussed on education across secondary schools in Hertfordshire. They aim to prevent youth homelessness by informing young people where they can get help and support when experiencing difficulty and by equipping them with the skills to deal with common challenges.

We offer classroom sessions that focus on the topics of homelessness, leaving home, independent living, managing conflict and healthy relationships. We have also piloted a new session on anger management during this year. Professionals continue to utilise our online materials and we have revamped and updated all our materials to create new worksheets and animated resources. Every young person is given a mini card with help/information tailored to each topic at the end of the session.



**8669**  
young people  
educated  
during 2021-2022



**95%**  
of those educated said  
that 'they knew where to  
get help and support if  
having problems at home'



**94%**  
of those educated said  
that they 'can now  
recognise how their  
behaviour may influence  
an argument'



'If I have a problem  
I know where to go.'  
Year 8 student

'The sessions were generally very well received by the students. They also served to give a reality check to some of the students who had not thought their plans through thoroughly enough yet. The education hyh provide is invaluable in helping our students, many of whom are vulnerable, to make informed decisions and avoid the pitfalls that are out there.'

## 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, guardians or carers work together to build better relationships with each other. Where possible, we aim to prevent family breakdown.

**80** families supported,

**74** of these with a young person aged 10-15



**67%**  
reported they felt more  
able to maintain positive  
family relationships



**89%**  
of those we  
supported remained  
in the family home

Funded by Children in Need, our Dual Diagnosis Family Link worker supported

**55**

young people and their families with mental health support and substance misuse issues

**Parent** – 'I learned more about my daughter and can understand where she is coming from'.

**Young person** 'We were able to discuss things that didn't get resolved previously and uncover hidden feelings as well as helping me and Mum to realise what we need to work on'.

## Hub



Funded by **Hertfordshire County Council**, the 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. We also work with those in crisis 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.

**396**

number of young people  
referred



**91%**  
prevented from needing  
to access Local Authority  
Children Services



**80%**  
prevented from making a  
homeless application

**1632**

nights of safe accommodation in  
Crashpad provided to young people



## Hub



“The information provided by the Hub worker was clear, she explained the way forward to me”.

“I know I can come back if I require the service in the future”.

“The worker answered my questions and I am happy with the service”.

Our Targeted Outreach worker gave additional support to

**39**

young people and their families

## Case Study Jermaine's Story



Jermaine, 17, became involved in a county lines gang at a young age. He was living with his dad, who became concerned about him and ended up taking on his debt to the gang. As Jermaine's dad was out on licence for a previous conviction, he ended up going to back to prison, leaving Jermaine and his siblings without a settled home.

Before his dad went to prison, Jermaine was happily settled at home. He describes it as a good home where he felt comfortable. He was living with his brother and sister and felt a responsibility to be a good big brother and role model to them. After his dad was arrested, Jermaine had to step up yet again and take on more responsibility, closer to that of a dad than a brother. He tried to provide his siblings with the same comfort and warmth that he had got from his father.

Jermaine was moving around frequently between different family members and was struggling to have a stable home life. Eventually he hit a point where he had nowhere else to turn. Without any stability, Jermaine felt a lot of stress and found the whole experience overwhelming. His mental health and emotions were all over the place and he felt angry for putting himself in this position.

It was at this point that Jermaine was referred to hyh and was allocated a Crashpad bed space— an emergency provision for people without anywhere else to stay. Speaking with Jermaine, he says he has found his time with hyh very helpful. We were able to provide him with access to a place to stay, support and some food vouchers. Jermaine told us 'hyh have been supportive in helping me move forward and make sure that I'm changing and I can be a better person. They have shown that life is still out there for me.'

Jermaine has been able to speak to members of staff openly about his situation. He says he has now been able to come to terms with what has happened and feels very positive for the future. When asked about his plans, Jermaine says he doesn't have many wishes except having somewhere stable to stay. He would also really like to reconnect with his family and have a good relationship with them where he visits them regularly.

Jermaine's goals are to go to work and become an active member in society:

“I want to be someone who can be looked at as a good person who's doing well for himself. A goal I have for myself is just to be the right person and choose right over wrong, speak about my emotions, and overcome my embarrassment and shyness when talking about my emotions and mental health”.



## Outreach



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.



**209**  
referrals  
(including 29  
Intensive Outreach)



**100%**

Showed an improvement in managing  
money and personal administration



**97%**

Showed an improvement in  
self care and living skills

**55**

young people supported  
by our Mental Health  
Outreach workers

**279**

calls answered by our  
Advice Line



## Case Study Mason's Story



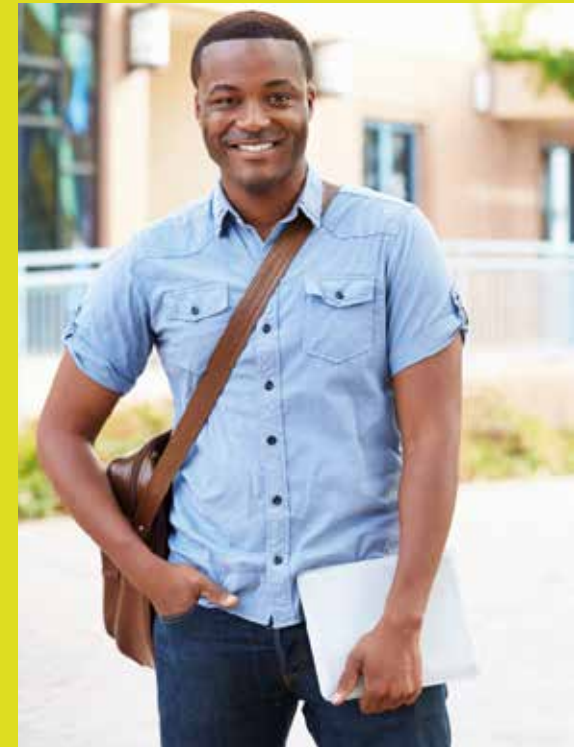
Mason is an 18-year-old care-leaver who was struggling with depression and isolation. He had spent several years in the care system and was very nervous about getting a flat of his own. At the time he was unemployed but hoped to move into education in the future. He was worried about how he would be able to afford all the bills as this was his first independent accommodation.

After being referred to hyh by his Local Housing Authority, one of our Outreach workers, Sue, helped Mason to register for utilities and set up a budget plan. He was also helped to register for changes in his benefits and apply for housing costs for his rent charges. He was unaware that he was entitled to grants for things like his electricity and wouldn't have applied without the help of hyh.

There was an issue further down the line where Universal Credit missed some rent payments, which took several weeks to resolve with the help of hyh. Sue helped Mason contact the housing provider to get all the evidence needed to demonstrate the error. Without this support he was at serious risk of losing his tenancy as his arrears were near to £1000. When other benefit issues with Universal Credit happened later, Mason was supported in dealing with them and when there was a break in income, hyh helped Mason to access a Foodbank and a local charity who provided funds for gas and electricity.

Mason was always kept in the loop and took part in phone calls. This approach has allowed him to learn the skills to deal with situations in the future more confidently.

Mason has spent a year in his current tenancy and has now been offered a secure tenancy with his social landlord.

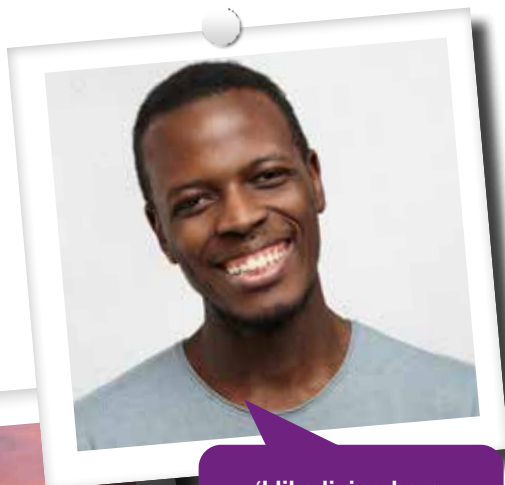




The aim of this new project is to support young people by providing a stepping stone from supported accommodation into an independent tenancy. Using a 6-bedroom house rented from Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council, which opened in January 2022 we are providing practical support to help our housemates achieve financial stability and the necessary level of confidence and maturity that they need to live successfully within the private sector.

**Our programme of support, includes:**

- Budgeting / managing bills
- Being a good housemate
- Getting into college / training / employment
- Cooking / cleaning skills
- Maintenance
- Building positive relationships

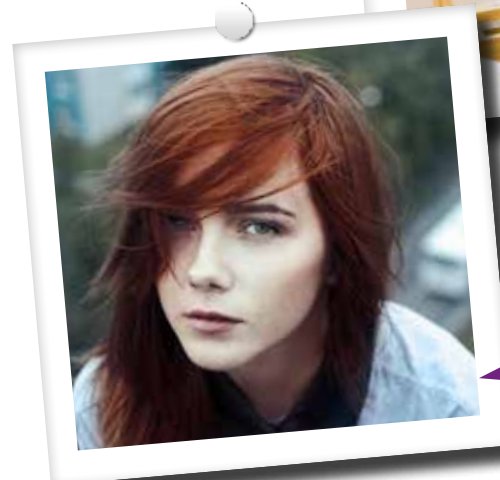


'I like living here,  
it is my home.'



At Future Roots we recognise that each individual has areas of their lives that they still need support with. These needs vary from person to person and our Live In Accommodation Worker assists each housemate to identify these areas, along with the support needed, so that they can build the necessary skills to take the next steps towards successful independent living.

The project has been generously supported by generous grant funders and corporate supporters who have offered practical volunteering as well as work experience for our housemates.



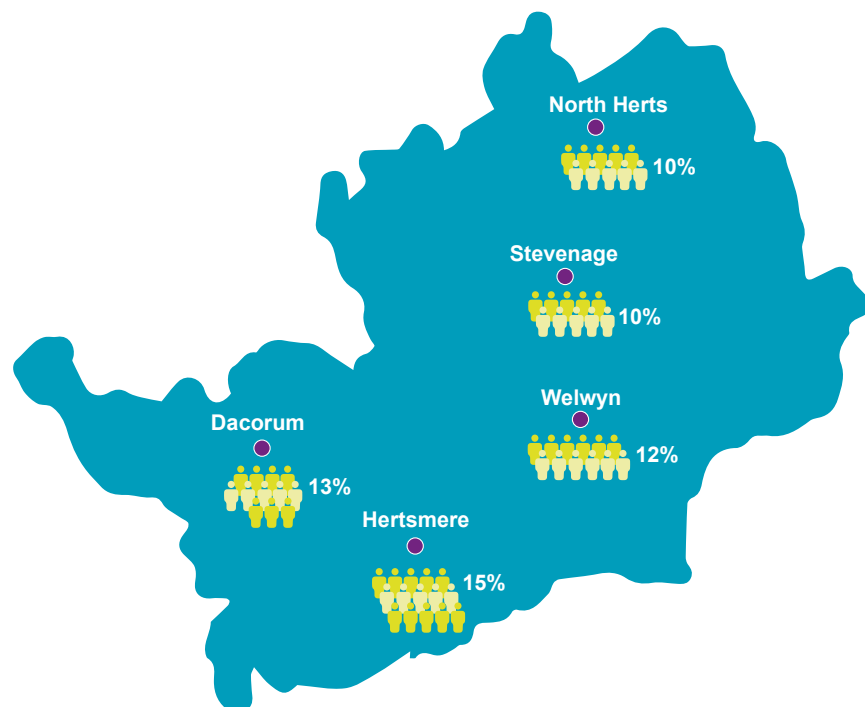
'I get practical support  
here and if I feel upset  
I can get emotional  
support too.'

## Our busiest areas

Our busiest areas are **Stevenage, North Herts, Welwyn, Dacorum and Hertsmere.**

The people we helped:

**55%** female **41%** male  
**4%** Non binary/Trans/unknown



## 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 through events and virtual events including sponsored walks, runs, 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](mailto:marketing@hyh.org.uk)



Golf Day at Shendish Manor Golf Club, raised

**£8,800**



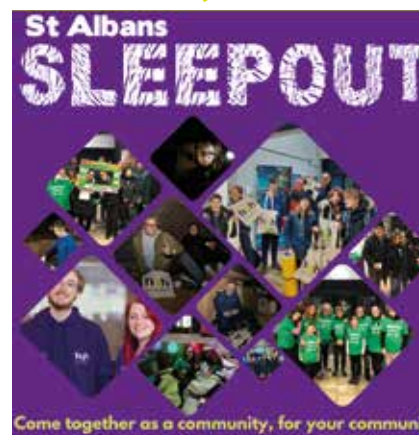
The Echelon Conference, raised

**£26,000**



Charlie running The London Marathon, raised

**£5,011**



Sleepout, raised

**£58,992**



The Big Give, raised

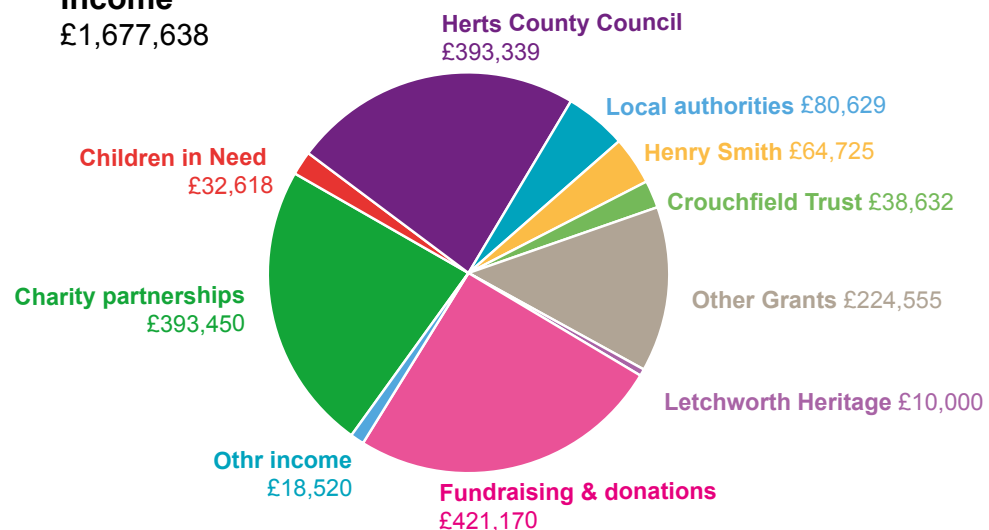
**£24,287**

Registered with  
**FUNDRAISING  
REGULATOR**

# Our Finances

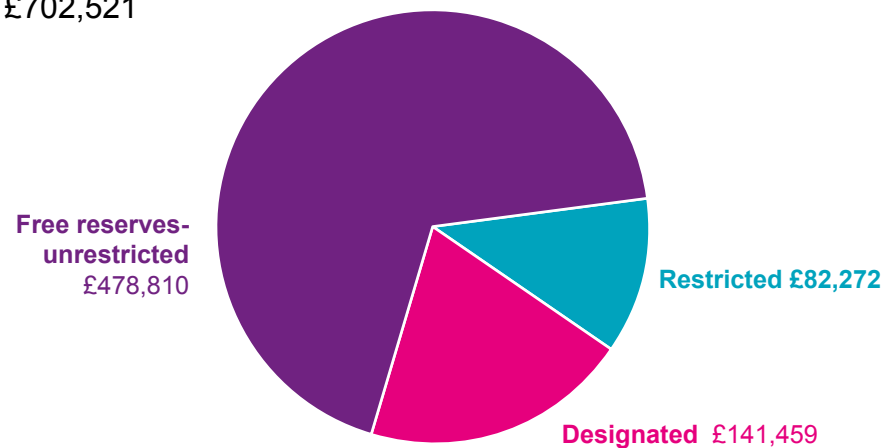
## Income

£1,677,638



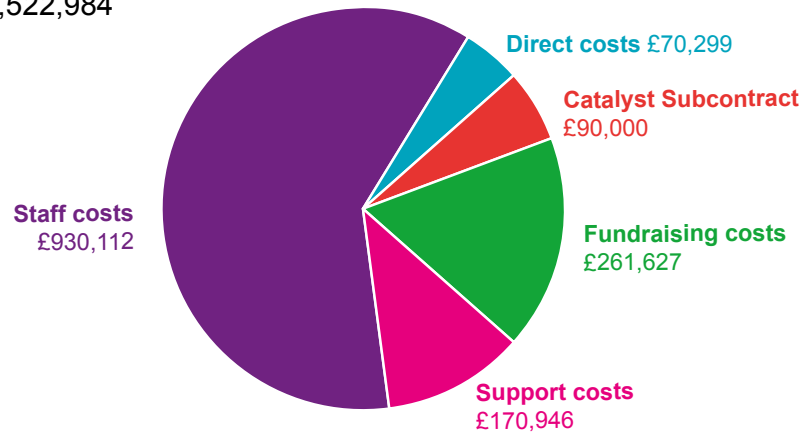
## Reserves

£702,521



## Costs

£1,522,984



## 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.

### Schools

### Event Participants

Hertfordshire County Council

Local Housing Authorities

Charitable Trusts & Foundations

### Regular Givers

Individuals & families

Community Groups

Partner Charities

Companies

Faith Groups

## 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](mailto:friends@hyh.org.uk)



Making a  
difference to  
local young  
people

