


Annual Review

2018



 Path



Path Annual Report 2018

This report covers Path's work in the year April 2017 to March 2018.

Who We Are

Path is an independent charity supporting people who are vulnerable to homelessness in Plymouth, Devon. We do this by offering a range of advice and support services, from help for rough sleepers on the street through to enabling people to set up and maintain tenancies.

Path Services

Services that we currently provide:

1. Support for Rough Sleepers

We support people who are sleeping rough in Plymouth to move off the street.

2. Resettlement Scheme

We provide temporary accommodation in the community to single people facing homelessness in Plymouth.

3. Housing Information, Sign-posting and Support (HISS) Service

Working with BCHA and (until March 2018) Broadreach, we provide housing information and individual support to people who are single and homeless, including people using mental health, drugs and criminal justice services.

4. Access to Private Rented Housing

Our Renting Support Service (RSS) helps people (single people and families) set up their own private rented tenancies.

We also work with Plymouth City Council and Plymouth Homes4Let to run the **Easylet** scheme, taking on properties for landlords and letting them to people facing homelessness.

5. Refugee Integration Service

Working with START, and now other partners, we provide housing and integration support to refugees in Plymouth, especially those who have recently gained leave to remain in the country.

Key Statistics 2017/2018

- Our Renting Support team moved over 250 households into private rented housing.
- The HISS Advice team gave advice and support to 673 people
- We helped clients save over £45,000 towards their deposits
- We secured grants for over 250 clients totalling over £60,000
- We also helped 173 clients with money we've raised, ourselves
- We accommodated 107 people in housing we run directly

Director's Message

For Path, 2017/18 was another busy year. Homelessness continues to blight the whole country, with many factors feeding into this national issue. The lack of affordable housing, welfare reform, cuts to services, all contribute. Addressing it requires concerted, cross-departmental government commitment. We also need investment in local authorities, key bodies for providing and funding support for vulnerable people.

In the meantime, what we've seen is charities trying to innovate, to join up better and to find new ways to help people. Sometimes that is encouraged by commissioners of services, refugee work in Plymouth being an example: as of June 2017, the Refugee Integration Service sees Path, START, ODILS and the PDREC formally working together. Another example of development is Path taking on our own houses last year to directly provide temporary accommodation to people we see.

So, 2017/18 was a time of continued work to support people vulnerable to homelessness, aiming to keep existing services going and develop where we can. Despite continued cuts from central government, Plymouth City Council continues to fund services, meaning that Plymouth is still a city working to address homelessness and other vulnerabilities and to do so creatively. Indeed, the year ahead will see many services re-tendered and, for the future, potentially re-configured as we all work to improve how we support our City.

Mike Taylor, Director

Services Review, April 2017 to March 2018

Rough Sleeper Support, Plymouth

The aim of the Rough Sleeper (RS) team is to work to reduce and prevent rough sleeping across the city in conjunction with other housing and support providers. To achieve this the team carries out early morning outreach sessions, where workers find and positively interact with those on the street, encouraging them to engage with services, to ultimately get them off the streets and in to accommodation. This is followed up with support and advice at drop-in sessions. Nevertheless, in Plymouth, as across the country, the number of people sleeping rough has consistently risen. The team saw an average of 100 people each

quarter last year, nearly a third of whom had no connection to Plymouth.

61 clients over the twelve months were assisted to access supported accommodation and 12 were supported via 'reconnection' to return to a place here they have more options.

At the same time, and supporting this, Plymouth has a strong Rough Sleeper services partnership. Path runs the Strategy Group, working with partners from PCC, hostels, Shekinah, the Soup Run and others. At the end of 2017 and start of 2018, we worked together to identify plans and priorities, producing a Rough Sleeper Action Plan for the City.

Resettlement Scheme

Path provides temporary accommodation to people who are homeless via shared houses in the community.

Some of the houses are run in partnership Reestart, which provides the accommodation, with Path providing the housing management. From 2017, Path also has its own houses.

The scheme is completely self-financed from the rental income, with 45 rooms

provided in total. People can stay for up to a year, but the average length of stay is 14-16 weeks.

In 2017/18 we accommodated 107 people, with 47 people moving on from the scheme in a planned way. Around 40% of those who move-on go into the private rented sector through the Renting Support Team and receive a Deposit Guarantee from Path.

Case study

S moved into our temporary accommodation after being evicted from his previous flat for rent arrears, following redundancy. When he moved in he was really low, finding himself in the benefit system for the first time in his life and struggled with the stigma of this. We assisted in setting up a payment plan for the previous arrears and got him linked in with some training.

Within 3 months he had completed a training course through the Job Centre which led to him gaining full time employment again. Through the help of the Renting Support team he secured a self-contained flat, which we managed to furnish with our storage unit. He said the experience was much more fulfilling than he imagined and has since been settled into his new job and home for 4 months.

Housing Support for Women

Thanks to funding from Lloyds Bank Foundation, Path is able to offer support to women engaged in the criminal justice system who are vulnerable to

homelessness. We work directly with probation services, supporting women with very complex lives.

In this period, 38 women were supported.

Case study

A woman referred who was homeless, living in temporary accommodation run by BCHA. She applies for social housing and was awarded band B (high banding). We supported her to bid for a property with Plymouth Community Homes (PCH) and secured rent in advance for her. She had struggled financially and we helped her clear her debts. We also raised nearly £1000 to help furnish the property (including carpets).

In time, our client applied for a mentoring course. Now that her period on probation is finished she is working as a volunteer mentor helping other women in the criminal justice system.

Housing Information, Sign-posting and Support (HISS)

HISS stands for The Housing Information, Signposting and Support Service. It

provides information, advice and on-going support to single people in Plymouth who

are vulnerable to homelessness, especially people with complex needs.

HISS has been a partnership between Path, Broadreach Housing Support Services and Bournemouth Churches Housing Association (BCHA), under the lead of BCHA, much of the capacity being for individual support for people, working alongside the advice element that Path provides.

The Advice Team provides a range of services including:

- ✎ short pieces of tenancy support work
- ✎ accommodation seeking, including homeless approaches
- ✎ raising funds via charities
- ✎ liaison with other agencies
- ✎ person-centred housing support work.

Our Housing Support roles include a Mental Health Housing Support Worker (HSW)), who works closely with

Psychiatric and Community Mental Health Teams, Adult Social Care, housing providers, Plymouth City Council and a range of others. The majority of the client group present with complicated housing & severe and enduring mental health issues.

We also have an Ex-offender Housing Support Worker, supporting clients often on supervision or licence and occasionally one or two clients who come under the Community Forensic team.

HISS stats (Path's team):

- ✓ saw 464 people last year at drop-ins
- ✓ overall, gave 673 people housing advice (Advice Team)
- ✓ housed 175 people (Path's HISS Advice and Casework teams, some in partnership with the Renting Support Service)
- ✓ raised £21,471 for clients purely from benevolent funds

Ex-Services Housing Support

Funded by the Royal British Legion (RBL), this service enables us to provide advice and Tenancy Support to ex-Services people facing homelessness. Additional support is given around accommodation seeking, applying for grants and welfare benefits, debt advice, negotiating rents with private landlords, setting up utilities, and resettlement.

- ✓ From 1st April 2017 to March 2018, there were 56 people from the ex-Services community (including families) referred for support regarding accommodation.
- ✓ We helped house 31 households, often working with the Legion.
- ✓ Over the year, 63 clients received tenancy sustainment support.

Refugee Integration Service (RIS)



From June 2017 the Refugee Housing Support Service (RHSS) became part of the Refugee

Integration Service (RIS) which brought together a partnership formed of Path,

START, ODILS and PDREC. This contract is funded under the Home Office Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement Scheme (SVPR) and supports:

- ✎ Syrian families under the SVPR Scheme
- ✎ New arrivals coming through Family Reunion

- 📌 Refugees granted Leave to Remain who live in Plymouth
- 📌 Current refugees who would benefit from integration support.

The service primarily exists to support families and individuals from Syria over a 3 year period to integrate in to the local community with assistance from a caseworker who will support the individual through the development of a Personal Integration Plan.

Each organisation within the partnership brings specific and specialist support to

our clients. Path as the lead organisation provides support in housing and accommodation, START leads on integrating and supporting clients, ODILS delivers ESOL to 100 learners per year and PDREC provides support to communities and refugee awareness sessions. Since the service started in June 2017, our partners have supported 4 SVPR families equating to 21 individuals, along with many existing refugees in Plymouth, new refugees and family reunion cases.

Plymouth Renting Support Service (Plymouth RSS)

Our Renting Support Service (RSS) houses people in the private rented sector. Working with a large number of landlords and letting agents, we look at people's needs and options, aiming to help them move into accommodation let at affordable rents.

We support single people and – referred by Plymouth City Council – families. The local authority's Community Connections is a key partner but people are also referred by hostels and other local homelessness services.

As well as issuing deposit guarantees to secure tenancies, we secure money from

benevolent funds for deposits, rent in advance, fees and furniture. At the same time, we work with the City of Plymouth Credit Union, helping people set up and use savings accounts to build up a deposit for when our Deposit Guarantee expires.

In 2017/18, this core Path service:

- ✓ Set up 193 tenancies in the PRS
- ✓ Supported 182 clients to set up credit union accounts, saving over £45k
- ✓ Had a claims rate of 8% of Deposit Guarantees
- ✓ 93% of the people who left the service moved on in a planned way.

RSS: Enhanced Young Persons Service

The Enhanced Young Persons Housing Support Service is a development of the wider Plymouth Renting Support Service, also funded by Plymouth City Council (PCC). We assist care leavers, and young people aged 18-24 moving on from specific supported accommodation. Many of these young people have never held a tenancy before, and therefore present a greater perceived risk to a landlord. We are able to work with landlords, provide targeted support to the young person, and offer an enhanced Deposit Guarantee to help these vulnerable young people into a more settled life.

We housed 51 people during the year, each provided with 12 months support following move in to the property – the same as the core PRSS service. This service had just a 1% claim rate against Deposit Guarantees.

RSS Tenancy Sustainment

Some families or individuals we help into housing need additional support to help set up or maintain their tenancies. Our Tenancy Sustainment work provides intensive, time-limited, interventions to tenants who have been issued a Deposit Guarantee.

Along with linking people with other services, this role involves helping people maximise their income, applying for grants and procuring essential items (furniture and white goods) and providing support to set up utilities.

Easylet Scheme

The Easylet scheme is run in partnership with Plymouth City Council and [PH4L](#) letting agency to make letting easy for landlords whilst providing affordable, good quality private rented accommodation for people in housing need.

Our staff member works with landlords, advising them about renting, addressing and advising about property standards and offering a letting service via PH4L. This gives more access to accommodation to people approaching PCC Community Connections and Path who are in need of accommodation.

A key part of the role is also to source private rented housing for refugees coming through the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (SVPR). Plymouth has committed to resettling 150 people through the programme over a 3 year period and Easylet is an important part of providing suitable accommodation for families coming here.

At any time, there are over 60 properties under Easylet management, our staff member working with PH4L to manage them.

Feedback from landlord

“Our business acquired a property in Devonport that was converted into 5 flats in 2016. The flats were already occupied on purchase but unfortunately the tenants presented a range of issues that made the building as a whole very difficult & time consuming for us to manage ourselves.

We approached Easylet to manage the building for us. Over a period of time they have helped us to transform the occupancy of the building. The most problematic tenants have been helped to move on to alternative accommodation, additional support provided to those tenants who have needed it & new tenants have been found who EasyLet felt were right for the property & who, most importantly, were able to co-exist peacefully with the existing tenants as neighbours.

The building is now a harmonious one with good tenants who are happy to be in their flats & rents are paid in full each month. I believe that Easylet's links played a vital role in allowing the occupancy of the building to be changed.”

Other Support For Clients

Some people we see primarily need help to get access to suitable accommodation. That may include advice, advocacy and maybe a Deposit Guarantee. Others need and want more support, whether access to other services, including health, or more in-depth support with budgeting. As many are on a low income, a key factor is money to set up a home.

Some of that means helping our clients plan, budget and maximise their income; but often people need (sometimes small) amounts of money to help with In terms of benevolent funds that have helped our clients we want to gratefully acknowledge St Martin's In The Field (aka Vicar's Relief), B&CE and the David Gibbons Foundation, amongst others.

something specific. Path workers therefore often try to raise money for clients from external funds.

- Last year Path staff raised £60,000 for 235 clients
- We also helped 173 via our own Hardship funds

We have some funds to provide various types of 'tenancy packs'. Last year we gave out kettles, 'starter packs' and, very specifically, 90 bedding packs.

For anyone able to contribute or get involved in fundraising, please get in touch with us on 01752 255889 or at info@pathdevon.org

Plymouth Frontline Network

In 2017 Path became a partner of St Martin's Frontline Network and set up a Plymouth network of and for workers in homelessness and related fields. The aim of this is to value, support and learn from the knowledge and experience of frontline workers.

The Plymouth Network is linked to the national St Martins Frontline Network, which exists to harness the ideas, energy

and experience of those at the frontline working with people experiencing homelessness. This is done by building relationships, sharing best practice, developing solutions and communicating the experience and views of the frontline.

Setting up a Plymouth Network has enabled Path to support workers to share ideas, learning, good practice and more, aiming to improve service delivery.

Re-use Scheme

Path successfully secured two years of funding via the Frontline Network's Ideas Board for an initiative to cover storage facilities to store furniture donations from the public. These items are provided to clients when setting up home.

The service has been invaluable for people securing move on accommodation and adds options for clients to access these resources immediately, as well as bringing an environmentally positive approach through use of recycled goods.

Key Developments in 2018/2019

There are some significant things for the year ahead:

- Using the Rough Sleeper Action Plan, Plymouth successfully bid to government for more resources to address **rough sleeping**, which will be a key priority for the year ahead
- We will not only continue to provide **temporary housing**, ourselves, but will add to it
- Service for **people with complex needs** will continue to be developed, including various Path services, as we, partners and commissioners work together

Path as an organisation

Objectives & Activities

The charity's objectives are that of relieving poverty within the City of Plymouth and beyond, by providing assistance to those in housing need.

Governance

Path has a clear structure, with a board of trustees overseeing the charity and a Director, service managers and operational workers. We constantly look to enhance how we run Path: from improving policies and planning to reviewing services; updating job descriptions and reviewing Path's public benefit, ensuring that we contribute fully to the communities in which we work and stay relevant and effective.

Income

Path's biggest single funder is Plymouth City Council, from its own funds and from monies received locally from central government. Equally, some funding comes to Path directly and some via partnerships.

Other funders include: Lloyds Bank Foundation, the Royal British Legion and St Martins In the Field. We greatly appreciate all the support and funding that we receive.

As we provide housing, we now also receive income from rents, enabling us to provide accommodation for people most in need.

Website

Our website is used as a source of information for landlords and other agencies as to what we do, and also for staff recruitment. We regularly review it, updating information and trying to make it more useful and accessible.

www.pathdevon.org

Twitter

We continue to use Twitter and have over 1000 followers. We use our account to share news and information about Path, partners, housing and homelessness. You can follow us **@PathDevon**.





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Funding Partners

