



Annual Report 2023



Path Annual Report, Apr 22 – Mar 23

Path is an independent charity supporting people who are vulnerable to homelessness in Plymouth, Devon.

Significant developments

- 📌 In response to local need, we continued to increase the number of family homes we provide as temporary accommodation
- 📌 We have been an active partner in Plymouth's Homes For Ukraine scheme
- 📌 Working with Devon and Cornwall Refugee Support we started providing accommodation for asylum seekers appealing their decisions

Key statistics

- 📌 385 people evidenced sleeping rough in Plymouth
- 📌 187 new individuals accommodated in our temporary accommodation for single people
- 📌 844 people contacted our housing advice line
- 📌 357 people were supported by a Path HISS caseworker
- 📌 149 households were moved into tenancies by our Private Rented team
- 📌 £56,808 was secured via benevolent funds, helping 168 clients in the year.

Message from the Director

Last year, 2022/23, was a time of both change and consolidation for Path, working to bolster what we do and keep developing it as needs and circumstances evolve.

Having grown in recent years, because of additional funding and also expanding our work as an accommodation provider, we have been working to continue what we do, carry on responding to local need but also ensure we have sufficient infrastructure, systems and governance in place to operate well. At the same time, working with partners, we are trying to make sense of a landscape with far less affordable housing and more homelessness. That is a key reason for us at Path taking on more properties, ourselves: we need to find ways to provide accommodation to people at a time when that is harder than ever.

So, it is a challenging time for people on low or even moderate incomes who need housing; and that reality dominates many aspects of what we do, spurring us to look at alternatives, to find ways to make things affordable and definitely to continue to work in partnership. That applies to partners in the Plymouth Alliance, those we work with in refugee services, specific social and private landlords and many others who are not part of formal groupings but with whom we liaise in all sorts of ways.

Underpinning it all is our understanding that we all need homes, so we can have a chance of being safe, so we can have stability and so we have some control over our own lives.

Mike Taylor, Director

Services Review, April 2022 to March 2023

Rough Sleeper Team

The Rough Sleeper Team (RST) works to reduce and prevent rough sleeping across the city in partnership with other housing and support providers. Due to demand and complexity on the street we are now a team of 3 full time rough sleeper workers.

The team delivers early morning outreach sessions, locating and engaging with those sleeping on the street. RST aims to create opportunities for sustained change and positive outcomes.

In 2022/23 our team evidenced 385 people sleeping rough in Plymouth, an increase of 14.5% on the previous year.

- 310 Male
- 75 Female
- 219 had a local connection to Plymouth

Severe weather

It was a long, cold winter which meant SWEP (severe weather protocol) was activated on four separate occasions during December 2022 to February 2023. Supported by other Alliance Partners we provided and staffed emergency overnight space for evidenced rough sleepers who wanted to come in at Shekinah, George House and Devonport House. Plymouth City Council (PCC) offered some temporary accommodation, which was supported by 'additional pressures' funding from government. The Plymouth Soup Run remains a vital partner and provided food for SWEP but does so much more, for which we are extremely grateful.

In addition to this, over the summer months we responded to hot weather SWEP by providing cool spaces at Shekinah and increased daily outreach sessions to provide water, sunscreen sun hats and ice lollies for rough sleepers.

Saturdays

The Soup Run led on Saturday sessions at Shekinah from 9-12, which were well attended with 1095 attendances, averaging around 20 people attending each week. The session offers access to Podiatry, Dental School, Headspace and Art Therapy. Whilst these services are important the feedback from clients that resonated was "just having someone who listens". This session would not be possible without the support of Plymouth Soup Run Volunteers.

Case Study

Male entrenched rough sleeper. Previously in and out of accommodations but no tenancy skills, which led to eviction or abandoning the accommodation. Released from prison, struggling to trust professionals/system. Took 6 months to build a rapport with and for him to trust that we weren't going to give up on him and he was 'worth helping'. Discussed that he has no indoor living skills and that previously accommodations have always been shared. Would consider going indoors to self-contained accommodation.

Referred to a single accommodation service and moved in earlier this year. This accommodation had en-suite facilities, so felt less shared. Support in maintaining accommodation including interim

support with service charge and HIPP (Homelessness Inclusion Plymouth Pathway) team linking with him in the community around psychology and occupational therapy as well as health - malnutrition, hospital admission. Result: a positive, sustainable accommodation outcome.

Feedback to RST

“The real reason these folk progress in the way that they do is essentially because of the relationships that you have with them and the relationships that you have with other support services and the staff. I am really very grateful to you and X and others who do quite a remarkable job, quietly and steadily. The levels of empathy, understanding and insight you have and continuously build with those you work with is evidenced in your work and effort and relationships you build with people needing our services. It is unrelenting and authentic.” May 2022

“Want to pass on my thanks again to you and your fantastic team for the work you do and allowing me the opportunity to work alongside you for the 3 days, I have learnt a lot over this time and will be massively beneficial in my policing career so thank you!” Sept 2022

MARS

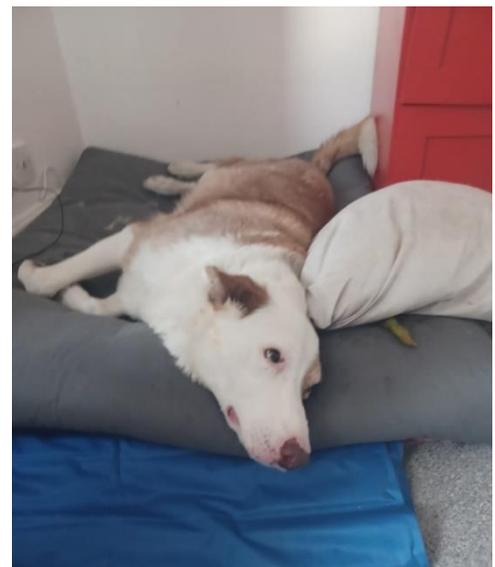
The MARS (Multi Agency Rough Sleeper) team is the intensive support part of the Rough Sleeper Team. It’s a government funded initiative that was established in July 2018 with Shekinah contributing a member of staff.

The MARS Team adopts a housing first type approach to deliver intensive, ongoing one to one support to rough sleepers to enable a move into their own accommodation. The 6 bed MARS House assists the team to facilitate that by offering safe accommodation for those with limited options or no accommodation offer.

In 2022/2023

- 75 people received ongoing support
- 25 were supported into accommodation

This year we welcomed our first dog into the MARS House. This enabled an entrenched rough sleeper with no accommodation offer to come indoors. We worked closely with the Street Vet to ensure all necessary checks were completed prior to move in.



MARS Case Study

An entrenched female rough sleeper in her 50s was allocated to the MARS Team approximately 14 months ago. She had been sleeping rough for around 5 years, services had previously engaged with her and she had been housed for a period of time. Unfortunately, mental health declined, she was lost in the system. Extremely difficult to engage with due to her mental ill-health, communication was limited and was quite adamant she didn’t require any assistance. It was then, my purpose to build a positive relationship in order to find suitable support with all aspects of day to day living. Staying warm, clean, and with food and water. The support also included helping her to seek medical help as she had ongoing physical and mental health issues, and to gain access to any benefit entitlement and potential housing options available to her.

A lot of time was spent in gaining her trust, I managed to support with visits to the GP and other medical services, which often meant taking the professionals into her environment. I was able to support in applying for PIP, which was awarded successfully. We continued to search for suitable accommodation, which was declined by the rough sleeper. Ongoing partnership working with appropriate services involved resulted in an admission to Glenbourne at the hospital. Within two weeks, her presentation was assessed as then being much more coherent and better accepting of support, that led onto a planned move into Therapeutic Mental Health Accommodation where she will continue to thrive and have her ongoing needs met with autonomy.

Resettlement

Our Resettlement service provides housing for single people who are in need of temporary accommodation. It is made up of 18 shared houses with 115 rooms, based close to Plymouth City Centre. As part of that, we have two all-female houses suitable for vulnerable women. The team comprises of six full time housing workers, one full time Admin worker, one full time Manager and two complex need workers supporting the team.

The houses are for people needing low support and who are close to being tenancy-ready, although since Covid people have been presenting with needs that are more complex. Referrals continue to come through the A2A system and we also use this system to discuss support for complex clients to step up to higher support accommodation like BCHA, Salvation Army or Livewest services. This is also part of Resettlement's move on plan.

Number of individuals assessed	266
Number of new individuals accommodated	187
Number of planned move-ons	143

ARE Home Project

The Appeal Right Exhausted (ARE) Home project provides a safe space for those asylum seekers who have no support from the Home Office. Without housing and support, they are destitute and at risk of exploitation. The purpose of the ARE scheme is to meet those needs, allowing those with grounds for an application to prepare for their new case. Hence, an agreement between Path Resettlement and Devon and Cornwall Refugee Support (DCRS) was established from November 2022. This agreement relates to taking on and managing properties to house asylum seekers not entitled to statutory accommodation. So, we at Path now manage rooms for five people at a time, nominated and supported by DCRS.

Feedback from the CEO of DCRS

'Path have been instrumental in providing housing to our NRPF clients in the city. This has had a huge impact on those individuals being able to have temporary stable housing so that we can work out their claims and find a positive exit strategy. Without Path's continuous support, our service users would be stuck in limbo without an end in sight. Thank you to Path and all their work.'

Complex Needs Support Workers

Our two Complex Needs Support Workers, employed by Shekinah on behalf of The Alliance, have been busy supporting the clients and the team. Their main role is supporting clients who have complex emotional and physical needs, including a physical disability, and enabling them to lead fulfilling lives and maintaining their independence in their own right. This might take the form of getting a medical diagnosis, arranging a medication assessment, move on plans, accessing support from external agencies and having regular meetings and updates.

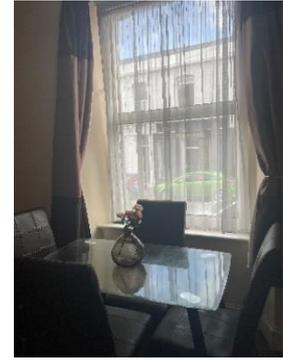
A typical day can range from booking appointments, arranging a PIP assessment, GP, Harbour or Probation support, filling out DWP forms and looking at benefits and Devon Home Choice registrations. Facilitating move on plans liaising with landlords, bidding, budgeting and support with attending viewings. Emotional support is also available to explore activities and family network.

Number on caseload with complex needs accessing support	56
Number of positive move ons	35

All Female Houses

Our two all-female houses have been growing and flourishing. We have been able to accommodate and support vulnerable women struggling with complex issues like domestic violence, drugs and alcohol and mental health, offering them a relatively safe space. This gives them time to access the support they need for a positive move on either to private rented accommodation or social housing.

The team is pleased to report that there has been 22 positive move ons this year from both houses. We are also working on a collaboration with Primrose house, which is a BCHA accommodation for vulnerable women to step down some of the women into the houses.



Case Studies

Case Study A

A moved into Path Resettlement temporary accommodation as her private landlord had decided to sell the property and had been issued with a Section 21. She was diagnosed with significant anxiety, depression and autistic spectrum disorder. It was necessary for A to be housed in appropriate accommodation due to her diagnosis and also, being a Trans woman, she was fearful of transphobic abuse.

Path was able to house her in a smaller house – 5 beds and she had an ensuite bathroom. The other tenants embraced her and were sensitive towards her gender orientation when she shared this with them. A was in Resettlement for 6 months and had a support worker working alongside the Resettlement team to support her manage her mental health diagnosis and to support her move on. Since moving into Resettlement, A's confidence has grown and her anxiety has reduced immensely. She was able to move into her own private rented flat, which is just 10 minutes' walk from the sea! A is an example of how well we all work together, sensitive housing management, housing support and access to autism support.

Case Study B

B moved into temporary housing in September 2021 due to domestic violence from her husband. She was in a joint tenancy with her husband and her husband was refusing to relinquish this. B was diagnosed with severe depression, she lacked confidence and motivation. Path offered lots of support work for her mental health before plans began for a move on into permanent accommodation. B was able to move into social housing in 2023.

Case Study C

C was living in a bedsit when the landlord decided to sell the property and the new agency increased the rent. Rent was increased from £400pm to £700pm. He was unable to afford the increase and was issued a Section 21. After he moved out from the property, he was living in his car for a few days and then evidenced rough sleeping at Devil's Point with his dog. He moved into Resettlement accommodation but unfortunately, he had to re-home his dog. He was supported with move on plans and was able to move into a private rented flat where he was reunited with his dog and now can have his daughter to stay over.

Feedback for Resettlement 2023

'I would like to thank you so much for all you have done for me and the help you have given me when I needed it the most. The last year and half has been horrendous for me and I could not have gotten through these past many months without PATH's help and support. I have got a new little part time job delivering pet food. I thank you for making sure I had food when I did not have anything and for this I am more than grateful and cannot sing your praise enough. I like my place and feel you have put me back on the right path.'

Housing Advice and Support

The Housing Information, Signposting and Support Service (HISS) provides support to single people in Plymouth who are vulnerable to homelessness, especially people with complex needs such as health issues and offending histories.

We work in partnership with BCHA, in particular, to provide individual support to people who are marginalised and / or vulnerable to homelessness with the aim to enable them to live independently; which is the goal we want for as many people as possible.

HISS support is more than just help to keep or gain housing, it includes an understanding that housing is vital for people to be safe and well; and so for people living independently. The support therefore tends to be provided by staff members working one to one with the person, looking not just at how they keep or secure their home (income, budgeting, advocacy, furniture/furnishings, bills, responsibilities and rights etc) but motivational work too; how they spend their time, what they aspire to and their health and their social links.

We allocate people who require support with the support worker who has the most relevant experience and training background.

One of the Path HISS Workers sits with the Integrated Offender Management (IOM) team which consists of Police, Probation, Path and Harbour. IOM is a programme to facilitate team working to deliver a local response to persistent and problematic offending. It provides an enhanced level of monitoring of those individuals identified locally as priority cases, while offering enhanced help with offending-related needs.

This year, people could access HISS support via a phone line, via a referral from another agency or they could refer themselves.

Staffing

In January 2023 a Path full time HISS Housing Support Worker left and the funding for this post was returned to the Alliance as each organisation was asked to make a cut. During March 2023 both of BCHA's full time HISS Housing Support Workers left. We handed over their open cases to the remaining Path HISS workers. At this point we had to stop taking referrals for all but the most urgent referrals that had a Section 21 or S8 (eviction notice) and signpost and all others to other appropriate services.

Advice Line Calls

The advice phone line continues to prove extremely popular with clients and also professionals looking for housing advice, enabling people to get immediate advice and/or referrals to other Path services and agencies.

- **844 people contacted the advice line and were given immediate housing advice**
 - 📌 126 of these callers were offered a case worker

Advice line case study: M

I was initially contacted by her daughter as M was sleeping on the sofa after fleeing her previous home. M has health conditions both physical and mental, specifically rheumatoid arthritis, heart conditions and PTSD from a previous abusive relationship. I helped M to make a homeless approach and M stayed with daughter in the interim. M was initially offered sheltered housing but was refused due to affordability reasons. I signposted her to services to help with her finances. M reduced her expenditure enough and was offered another flat. I applied for rent in advance from the Vicars Relief Fund. This was awarded and M moved in to the property. I also raised £550 from other benevolent funds for her (Northcott, Roslin Hall and LHH) which we spent on carpets; we organised quotes and fitting. I went with M to purchase items with the remaining funds: a sofa, a wardrobe and a little chest of drawers. M is now settled in sheltered housing and feeling safe and able to function financially. I signposted her to Improving Lives for help with managing health conditions and applying for disability benefits claim (PIP) as she would clearly qualify for this which will be vital as her income is very low currently.

Housing Support Workers

- **357 people were open to a Path Housing Support caseworker during the year**
 - 📌 4676 pieces of work were recorded as being done for these cases

187 cases were closed during the year.

Main Housing Support Work Caseworker Outcomes at closure:

- 📌 13 secured a Private Rented Tenancy and were supported to maintain it
- 📌 21 Secured a Social Housing Tenancy and were supported to maintain it
- 📌 9 were assisted to maintain / save their current tenancy

- 📌 13 secured supported accommodation
- 📌 19 secured temporary accommodation
- 📌 3 were supported into a long stay care homes / hospice
- 📌 61 people were given advice and/or signposted to other services as main outcome
- 📌 3 sadly died

Some thanks from clients

- 📌 I would just like to thank you for your kindness, the boxes etc, and the cat food. I know your paid to help people. But sometimes, i just feel it is important to say thank you, as appreciate what you are doing.
- 📌 After all the dealings with the different people things have run a little bit more smoother. Really I like to say that that was a big massive thanks to you and you are making me just be more determined and get us out there and also I've been able to explain things a little bit better so I really cannot thank you enough for everything you've done for us.

Also, thanks from other professionals

- 📌 From a Social Worker: I just wanted to give some feedback about T. We have had a few mutual clients now and T has been absolutely brilliant with all of them. He is really good at getting on their wavelength and being able to engage with people and work alongside them. I know the mutual clients I have had in common with T have really appreciated the support he has given them, this has often come from people who haven't initially wanted to accept any help from professionals. He is also great at communicating with other professionals and doing what he can to support the team around a complex individual which helps so much when we are all busy and juggling caseloads.
- 📌 From CAB: Great piece of work you have done for D and I, makes our job very special. Hopefully will work again soon with you. Many thanks for your help.

HISS Case Study: L

L was referred by the Complex Needs Team at Livewell. He had been sofa surfing for several years with his beloved dog after a relationship breakdown. L had been struggling with his addiction issues and mental health and his instability with his housing only made these issues harder for L to deal with. L worked with the HISS team for a long time; we ensured he was on DHC and bidding and called so many private landlords with him.

Eventually, we found a landlord that was happy with L, despite his drinking and addiction issues and was happy to have his dog. We paid a cash deposit for L from a Path fund and secured rent in advance for him from the Vicars Relief Fund and L moved into his self-contained flat in Feb this year. I set up his UC housing payments to go to the landlord and set up all his utilities, council tax and wifi. We helped with sourcing a grant for his initial energy costs from PEC and secured a Northcott grant to help with getting things he needed for his flat. We also sorted food parcels and took them to him.

Since moving in L himself has redecorated the whole flat; he wants to make this home somewhere he is proud of. After being homeless for a long period of time it was quite overwhelming having to organise bills and internet, but with the support of myself and his worker from the Complex Needs Team he is feeling on top of things and this is the start of a new chapter in his life.

Path AST Support

Path received some funding from central government as part of the national Rough Sleeper Accommodation (RSAP) Scheme. There are two aspects to the RSAP funding that Path's receiving.

One is for purchasing and repairing 1 self-contained flat and a 6 bed HMO, providing tenancies (ASTs) for people facing homelessness. The other is for support for people moving into these 7 rooms and 2 other Path HMOs (shared houses).

Together this means that Path is able to provide an AST Support Scheme, moving homeless people into tenancies with support. The support may therefore be provided to anyone in Path AST accommodation.

The Path AST Support Service started in January 2022 and the support workers have been working with the tenants of the 2 tenanted HMOs that Path owns and another 2 tenanted HMOs that Path leases. They have also linked in with Path's temporary accommodation to support people moving on from there into the Path AST houses.

- 📌 76 people were supported by the team to maintain their tenancies or move on into a tenancy.
- 📌 51 clients moved on from the service during the year
 - ❖ 16 moved on from Path temporary accommodation into Private Rented Tenancies
 - ❖ 8 moved on from Path temporary accommodation into Social Housing
 - ❖ 10 maintained their Path Private Rented Tenancy with support
- 📌 34 clients were open to the service at the end of March 2023

The support provided is:

- Individual, one to one support
- Negotiated with the person, focusing on their priorities and needs
- Therefore flexible
- Practical in terms of budgeting, managing utilities etc, as required
- Open, so that tenants may make contact when needed, even if they are no longer active clients
- Aimed at helping people succeed in their tenancies, be well and participate in society

Case Study: L

L was living in a Path house with an assured short hold tenancy. He was struggling in the house and had mental and physical health issues.

I met L weeks before his PIP tribunal was due to be held, he had applied with the support of Improving Lives. I offered to attend with him, contacted the DWP and Courts to register as his appointed support worker for this process.

It took hours trawling through over 100 pages of PIP paperwork to try and make sense of a document that seemed confusing and difficult to understand but I wrote a supporting letter and sent it to the court. L did really well answering difficult and probing questions from an intimidating panel and was awarded the higher level of PIP for daily living.

We then proceeded to search for a 1 bed flat, which took some time but we met with a landlord (LL) who said to me that he doesn't let properties to such young people but agreed to meet L and show him a studio flat. L didn't go for this flat and we kept looking but eventually the LL came up with another flat. When L saw it he thought it was perfect. The LL was kind enough not to show it to lots of people and agreed to let it to L for £475. It is a really nice flat, a good size and perfectly liveable.

L used some of his PIP money for his deposit and we were applied to the Vicars Relief Fund for the rent in advance. I helped L the day he moved in to get the gas and electric set up and ensured he had everything he needed for the property, popped back a week or two later to check in and help set up a DD for water.

We have discussed looking for work at some point, even something he can do from home.

Ten Homes Scheme with PCH, April 2022 – March 2023

In April 2021 the Ten Homes Scheme was launched. Ten Homes is a partnership between Plymouth Community Homes (PCH) and Path, as part of The Plymouth Alliance, where PCH offers to provide 10 properties at a time for single homeless households.

PCH has a Tenancy Support Officer who works alongside our dedicated Ten Homes worker to support single homeless people through a nomination process into their properties. The Alliance nominates households and pays an extra 15% on top of the rent for the additional support PCH provides.

Nominations can come from Alliance colleagues for people they are working with who are ready to move on from temporary accommodation, for whom this is the right option. Support is offered from PCH and Path through the nomination process and for move in, setting up, stability and success. When someone is settled and no longer requires support, another property is brought onto the scheme for the next person.

This year

- ❖ 3 moved into PCH properties through the scheme
- ❖ 6 nominations are still being progressed to secure a property

8 nominations were closed during the year

- ❖ 4 moved into PCH properties through the scheme
- ❖ 4 nominations were refused

15 People have moved into PCH properties through the scheme since it started

5 that have moved in have come to the end of their support and are still in their properties doing well

Feedback from clients who moved into a PCH property through the 10 Homes Scheme:

'You ladies beared with me. You gave me break after break after break. You just got me in time.

I got my benefits have been sorted out. You put up with my antics and give me a shake on the shoulders.

Without this support, I wouldn't have been able to cope the little panics I have had. The little dramas that comes with running a place. This is the longest time I have been single in my life, on my own. I want to go back to work now'

'I have been in my flat for over a year but without the help and support from PCH and Path, I don't know where I would be now. Also the ongoing support and help they still give me. I can't thank them enough for all they have done for me.

I have had some blips and became unwell. I have ups and downs, trying to get used to the new lifestyle with bills and stuff, instead of wasting money on drink. Since moving out of temporary accommodation, my life has changed and it has not always been straight forward or easy. It's helpful to have support workers, familiar faces that I know as I don't like meeting new people. I depend on them and I know they will be there for me.

I am proud of where I am and what I have got and I respect it. I work hard every day. I have been along to activities and meetings with my workers and tried these things'.

15 Family Homes Scheme with PCH

The 15 Homes scheme began in April 22 and is a partnership between Plymouth Community Homes and Path.

It is a scheme to assist people in temporary accommodation to secure social housing. Families are nominated by the Alliance and will be families that are struggling to secure permanent accommodation and are therefore stuck in temporary accommodation (temp) and blocking the route for other families. Families will require extra support and will not already be a band B on Devon Home Choice (DHC) at point of nomination.

The accommodation isn't temporary: it will be move on from temp, giving people accommodation of their own which – if all goes well with Path and PCH support – will become a standard social tenancy after 12 months. Once that happens, the support would still be available but on an as-needed basis; and the property would effectively move from the scheme into 'general needs'. PCH will then free up another property to have on the scheme, with a rolling total of fifteen at a time.

This year

- ❖ 6 moved into PCH properties through the scheme
- ❖ 5 nominations moved into Social Housing via DHC
- ❖ 5 nominations are still being progressed to secure a property (as of June 23 all 5 have moved into a property!)

All of the families that have moved in through the scheme are doing really well. As standard, they have all had:

- ❖ their property carpeted using the Path Flooring Fund and/or other benevolent fund money
- ❖ all their white goods secured through benevolent fund money/other sources
- ❖ help setting up all their utilities, CT and rent payments
- ❖ assistance to maximise their income

1 family has ended their support with the 15 homes Scheme after the initial set up as they are maintaining the tenancy well.

Case Study

B is a single mother to a young daughter. She was staying at The Oyo hotel due to being served a Section 21 at her previous property. B's Council Officer emailed me requesting I support her. B had a severe distrust of people, especially professionals, and to begin with, all conversations were via text and B agreed to meet me at her hotel in a public space. It was evident that B had experienced trauma that had severely impacted her mental health and at points was debilitating for her.

B and I began forming a relationship mainly via texts. Shortly after further temporary accommodation was offered, a small flatlet. At this point B had asked for any information from PCC to be delivered through myself, so I texted B to let her know that further temp had been offered. She did not want to go but I asked B if she would be prepared to give it another go, with my support, on the condition that if it was unsuitable, I would raise this. B took a leap of faith and moved into her new temporary accommodation.

I felt immediately that B would be the perfect candidate for the 15 Family Homes scheme, as we would be able to directly match her to a property, in an area that she felt safe in, in a property that she could have her dogs back which provided her with security and that would allow her to heal.

In order for B to feel less anxious, she needed me to go through every piece of information with her with a fine-tooth comb, from the 15 Homes paperwork to the funding that I would apply for. She then researched all of these things herself. We got to a point where B was ready to complete the paperwork and meet with PCH. This in itself was a piece of work; PCH handled this meeting with much caution and compassion, and we took it at B's own pace.

B was accepted and PCH began the search for B's home. And then it happened, B was offered a property after 3 weeks. I remember feeling equally as nervous and really hoped it would be exactly what B and her daughter needed in order to move on with their lives. I called B and gave her the address; which she immediately went to. She called me shortly after. I had expected reticence, but much to my surprise B was cautiously excited.

The coming weeks were met with nervous anticipation, fear and a lot of anxiety. I secured money for the house to be carpeted entirely, and all white goods. B and I began planning her décor and she would send me messages every day. Move in day came around fast in mid-July. I visited B the next day, her property was perfect.

Without the 15 Homes project, B would likely still be in temporary accommodation, fearing that it was impacting on the development of her daughter, unable to sleep due to intrusive thoughts, and without support.

Refugee Integration Service (RIS)

RIS is a multi-agency partnership formed of Path, [START](#), [ODILS](#) and [PDREC](#) to support refugees in Plymouth. This contract is funded under the Home Office Vulnerable Person Resettlement Scheme (VPR) and supports:

-  Families from Syria 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

Path's work in 2022/23:

-  Contacts made and queries supported via "virtual" drop-in: 237
-  Clients worked on caseload: 52
-  Clients helped to move into tenancies in the private rented sector (PRS): 16

🏠 Clients helped to move into Social housing: 10

🏠 Client supported into Resettlement: 14

Ukraine Scheme

Path is a partner in Plymouth's Homes for Ukraine Scheme, providing a full time support worker for hosts. The role addresses:

- Role of host
- Agreements between host and guests
- Guidance for host re boundaries, use of facilities etc
- Mediation between hosts and guests
- Understanding of and access to relevant local services
- Problem-solving
- Understanding and updating hosts on relevant government updates
- Guidance re move on for guests

Referrals

- 151 Referrals were received from PCC for host support
- At the end of the year:
 - ❖ 94 of these hosts still have their guests
 - ❖ 57 guests have left their hosts accommodation, including
 - 17 moved on to Private Rented Accommodation
 - 10 moved on to another host
 - 11 moved out of Plymouth
 - 7 moved on to temporary accommodation
 - 7 returned to Ukraine

Drop In

Drop-ins started on 27/7/22 at the START HQ building to offer advice and guidance (including re move on) to hosts or guests.

As well as the START Guest Support Workers and Host Support Worker being there, a Path Private Rented Access Service worker (PRAS) is also present so that hosts and guests can be advised about move on options, and be linked straight into the PRAS team for an assessment.

Feedback from Hosts

'Thanks Tracy. I found it very emotional talking to you this morning and your support and validation has helped J and I immensely'

'Please can I say thank you for all your help and support both at the start and the end of our hosting a Ukraine refugee. Your service has been invaluable. Keep up the great work.'

'I would like to thank you for all the help, support and guidance you gave me whilst I had a Ukrainian guest in my house. It was good to know that there was someone there for the host, as well as the guest, something I had never thought of, or felt necessary'

'P and I would like to thank you for your help and support over the past seven months. In particular, I would like to say a very big 'thank you' to you for always being so responsive, for taking our calls and listening to our concerns (and for your advice in dealing with them).'

Private Rented Access Service (PRAS)

The Private Rented Access Service aims to assist those that are vulnerable to homelessness, such as living in temporary accommodation, to access accommodation in the private sector.

Referrals

We received 649 referrals to the service over the year. Over 100 more than last year.

Most of those referred will have had an appointment where advice would be given, an assessment done thinking about suitability and affordability of rented accommodation and a discussion about renting.

Move-ins

Our biggest challenge remains a low supply of available rental properties and an increase in rents (with no corresponding increase in Local Housing Allowance). However, we have still been able to assist 149 households to access privately rented accommodation over the year.

Service	Moved in with use of a Deposit Guarantee	Moved in without the use of a Deposit Guarantee	Total
Main Service	48	50	98
Offender Service	7	18	25
Young People Service	11	15	26
Total	66	83	149

- 66 Deposit Guarantees were issued.
- 83 households did not require the use of a deposit guarantee as funds were sourced to be able to pay a cash deposit.
- Our Criminal Justice Service, funded by the Probation Service, continues to provide extra support for those on probation or leaving prison to access rented accommodation, including additional capacity from January 2023.
- Our Young People Service continues to provide extra support to those people under 25 to access private accommodation.
- We secured a fund of money to be able to offer cash deposits to all families and many single households. This meant a reduced number of deposit guarantees were issued and an increase in the number of people we were able to provide a cash deposit for.
- Since October 2022 we have been working with Ukrainian households, including attending a weekly drop-in for Ukrainians at START. Advising 33 households and assisting 13 in to private rented accommodation.

Feedback:

"Just want to say a massive thank you to you and to the charity Path. I honestly can't explain how much you've changed mine and my little boys lives and I would of never been able to do it without your help. I actually cried with happiness today as we have a safe warm little home and

independence and I am honestly forever grateful for you for getting us up on our feet from the hardest Situation of my life.”

“Just wanted to say thank you again for today I really do appreciate all the time and assistance you are offering me helping me move forward and I am really thankful for it”

From a landlord: *‘Thank you very much for your help with this one. Greatly appreciated as per always!’*

Case study of working with a Ukrainian family

I met a group of young Ukrainian refugees at the drop in service provided by Students and Refugees Together (START). They had been living with a family through the Hosts for Ukraine scheme after fleeing the war. Although they had a good relationship with their hosts, they had been there for over 6 months and it was time for them to move on.

Despite all the challenges these young people have had to face since having to leave their homes and families, they were determined to make the most of the situation and had all secured employment and were keen to stay together. Together, we looked at the options available to them. The group decided they would like to try and find separate rooms in the same shared house and, after viewing multiple shared houses, we found a house that was in the perfect location for the group.

Path provided a deposit guarantee for each and they were in a position to be able to pay the rent in advance themselves. They have since been saving well towards their own deposits. We completed the usual checks and made sure there was an Energy Performance Certificate, Gas Safety Certificate and HMO licence for the property. I met the group on the day of the move in with the landlord and they each received their own Assured Short-hold Tenancy.

I did a home visit a few months later, they were all extremely happy and settled in their accommodation. I also heard from the landlord a few months later who said the house has never been so clean, tidy and happy. Since moving, all clients have been able to remain in employment, pay their rent on time and start to build a life in Plymouth.

Case study of working with a young person

I first met H whilst she was staying in a hostel, for an assessment for support from our private rented access service. My young client has faced a lot of hardship in her life and was placed into care for some time in her childhood. In the assessment my client shared with me that she had recently found out she was over 6 months pregnant and needed to move on from temporary accommodation but did not have the funds to do so. She was very worried about her and her unborn baby’s future and what options for accommodation there would be for her. Due to her low income and the fact that her benefits would not increase until after the baby’s birth, she could realistically only afford a room in a shared house which would not be suitable.

I arranged viewings for H with a landlord we know and attended the viewing with her. It was in good condition and H was keen and the landlord agreed to take her as a tenant. We managed to arrange for the Care leavers team to use money available for her towards paying the deposit and rent in advance for the property.

We were able to request a payment of DHP to supplement her LHA to the 2 bed rate until her benefits increased after the birth of her baby. So she was able to move to this lovely two bedroom property in time for the birth of her child.

I applied for help with her electric and water bills and applied to the Household Support Grant for an oven, whilst the Catholic Children's society kindly brought and delivered a brand new cot and pram for the baby.

Payments to landlords

We have paid £2720 to landlords/agents following claims on the deposit guarantee, a very low amount due in part to an increase in the number of cash deposits we've supported over the last 2 years but also the work we do with landlords and tenants to avoid rent arrears.

Savings

We have continued working with Westcountry Savings and Loans in order for tenants to be able to save for their own deposit. Tenants have saved £14,450.58 over the year with Westcountry Savings and Loans. This is towards their own deposit. We have opened 48 new savings accounts over the year.

Extras

- We have secured at least £130,000 from various funds towards deposits, rent in advance, arrears, furniture or other related costs of moving. We have secured £24,000 from benevolent funds, about £90,000 from Path run funds and around £16,000 from Discretionary Housing payments.
- We send a weekly 'bulletin' to about 300 staff working in services located mostly in Plymouth. We have identified hundreds of available rooms and properties over the year. Many of these are rooms in shared houses which remain more available compared to self-contained accommodation.
- We have provided 'tenancy training' covering security of tenure and securing accommodation in the private sector to about 100 staff from around 30 different organisations across Plymouth, Devon and Cornwall.

Easylet

The aim of Easylet is to recruit landlords and their properties on to the EasyLet scheme so that the properties can be specifically used to house vulnerable homeless households approaching through PCC Housing Options and the Home Office.

Landlords can opt to sign up and have their property fully managed by [PH4L](#) (a social letting agency), manage their property themselves through our 'tenant find service', be part of the Syrian Scheme or (if capacity allows) be leased by Path.

Year Overview

During this year we have continued our work with PH4L, helping them to manage their 45 rooms across 8 HMOs (shared houses), as well as the 20 rooms in HMOs that we lease or own, ourselves.

The HMO landlords have really struggled during the winter with the rise in energy costs, as well as the increase in cost of materials and labour for repairs; and as a result we are losing some of the

properties from our use. We have assisted many landlords during the year with their utility costs to keep them on the scheme.

We have increased our property portfolio for families, leasing more homes from landlords to use as temporary accommodation. The rental market for family homes has become unaffordable for the majority of families that are on a low income, meaning these properties are vital to ensure families aren't living in bed and breakfast. The rise in house prices has resulted in some landlords wanting to sell their properties to capitalise on prices, put their rents higher or change the use of their accommodation to holiday rentals. We receive a lot of interest in our family home leasing scheme.

During this year we secured:

- 📌 8 new family homes for leasing
- 📌 A 7 bed HMO which we assist the landlord to manage
- 📌 A 3 bed family home for the Syrian Scheme – managed by PH4L
- 📌 A 4 bed family home for the Syrian Scheme – self managed by the landlord

These add to our existing properties that are signed up to the scheme. At the end of the year we had:

- 📌 109 Rooms in 19 HMOs
- 📌 11 family leased properties

We moved 42 Households into Easylet accommodation.

Easylet Funds

We have 2 pots of money that we use to assist landlords and tenants on the Easylet Scheme: one for singles and one for families. We recycle the money in the pots where possible; if a large expenditure is required on a property we will request the landlord repays the fund through rents.

- 📌 We spent £23,098.27 from the singles fund during the year and recouped £13,281.80.
- 📌 We spent £44,049.24 from the families fund during the year and recouped £21,178.79.

The money is used to keep landlords on the scheme that wouldn't otherwise be able to pay for works required and recently we have used it to make one off payments to landlords to support them with utility costs.

Plymouth Frontline Network

For the first four months of 2022/23, we continued to run the Plymouth Frontline Network (PFN), supported by and linked to St Martin-In-the-Fields (SMITF). The Network linked and listened to workers, helping identify and respond to priorities, issues and training. We were pleased and grateful to be a partner of St Martin-In-the-Fields for the period of funding and continue to value the work it does nationally.

Hardship support

Most people Path supports are on low incomes. An important part of our work is therefore helping secure funds for essentials.

- Our team secured £56,808 via benevolent funds, helping 168 clients in the year.

- Our own Hardship Fund helped a total of 79 clients and provided 70 day rider bus tickets
- We were awarded two £10,000 Household grants that assisted 175 clients with utility arrears, purchase of essential goods and food.

The Plymouth Alliance

Path is an active member of The Plymouth Alliance, along with six other service providers, some sub-contractors and Plymouth City Council, working to provide and improve services for people with complex needs.

The Alliance brings together work in homelessness and substance use, making it all one contract that is planned and overseen together. For us at Path, that means collectively running The Alliance such as in terms of finance, communication, some shared governance and contracts; and also working together in terms of service provision, various groupings addressing single homelessness, families, hostel provision and more.

<https://theplymouthalliance.co.uk/>

Path as an organisation

Objectives & Activities

Path's charitable objectives are that of relieving poverty within the City of Plymouth and beyond, by providing assistance to those in housing need. Ultimately, we want to minimise the impact of homelessness on people's lives and, where possible, prevent it.

Governance

Path has a clear structure, with a board of trustees – one leaving and two joining in this year - overseeing the charity and a Director running it on their behalf. There are service managers – including two senior managers – plus Finance and Office Managers, with admin 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.

As we have grown we have been building, amongst other things, our Finance team. Plus, last year our Development Manager reviewed and updated our safeguarding policy and practices, looking at case studies with a social worker and implementing informal sessions internally with staff to look at referrals and outcomes of actual referrals.

She also continued oversight of (reviewing and looking at learning from) safeguarding, incidents, feedback and complaints. Plus beginning work on Cyber Essentials Accreditation, to ensure that Path is appropriately protected.

Income

Path receives funding from Plymouth City Council (PCC), some now via the Alliance contract. That includes funding from PCC, itself, and money that we and PCC have secured from central government (DLUHC) and Probation. One key element is Rough Sleeper Initiative funding, which we and other Alliance partners receive to improve how we support people sleeping rough and prevent others from joining them. Charitable funders in this period included: Crisis and St Martins in the Field.

As we are an accommodation provider, we also receive income from rents, enabling us to provide accommodation for people most in need, both temporary and now tenancies. We have three housing schemes, each generating income to pay for themselves: single homeless temporary

accommodation (Resettlement); single tenancies; and temporary family housing.

We value all the support and funding that we receive, totalling – with rental income – over £2 million pa.

With fund-raising, we are grateful to have the support of various individuals, community groups and enterprises, who voluntarily raise or donate funds to help our clients. We do not employ fund-raisers, contact individual members of the public or have any agreements; and we have had no complaints related to fund-raising.

Website

We use our website, in particular, as a source of information for landlords and other agencies as to what we do; and also for staff recruitment. We also have a section for articles we write, to share with others:

<https://www.pathdevon.org/latest-news--articles>

Twitter

We continue to use Twitter and have over 1700 followers. We use our account to share news and information about Path, partners, housing and homelessness. People can follow us **@PathDevon**.



Legal & Administrative Information

P.A.T.H. (Plymouth Access to Housing) Limited

Registered Office

The Harwell Centre
28 - 42 Harwell Court
Western Approach
Plymouth PL1 1PY

Trustees/Directors in 2021

Mr D Millar (Chair)
Mr C. McClellan
Ms N Sarlaka (retired in this period)
Ms Victoria Allen
Ms J Laing
Miss J Beer
Mr Christopher Coldrick

Chief Executive Officer

Mr M Taylor

Registered Company Number

4478819

Registered Charity Number

1097772

Contact Tel: 01752 255889

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Funding Partners:

