








This report covers Path's work in the year April 2019 to March 2020.

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.

Key Statistics 2019/2020

-  Our Rough sleeper team evidenced 340 people who were street homeless
-  Our Renting Support team moved 282 households into private rented housing
-  The HISS Advice team gave advice and support to 554 people via our drop-ins
-  The Resettlement Team accommodated 287 people in our temporary housing
-  We secured grants for clients totalling £65,000

Director's Message

The year 2019/20 was significant for Path for various reasons. One was that we further developed our temporary accommodation service (Resettlement), becoming more and more a landlord to people who come to us needing temporary accommodation.

Another was that it was the first year of the contract for The Plymouth Alliance, of which we and some of our core work are part. The Alliance brings together services in homelessness and substance use, in particular, with a new contract and structure. One of the achievements of The Alliance in that year was the development of a shared Accommodation Strategy, which both reflects and influences all of our work.

The government's Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) funding and work has again been crucial, enabling support and options for people previously missed out. The Plymouth partnership further developed our work, making more accommodation and support available to people in a joined up approach. It was possible to see the positive effect in Plymouth's annual rough sleepers count being lower than the previous year, at a time of national high numbers.

The financial year ended with Covid overshadowing everything. That has been a continuing challenge but also an opportunity, to work differently, to reduce barriers and to focus more than ever on what people really need from us.

Mike Taylor, Director



Services Review, April 2019 to March 2020

Rough Sleeper Team

The Rough Sleeper (RS) team works to reduce and prevent rough sleeping across the city in conjunction with other housing and support providers. It is work that now sits within the Plymouth Alliance contract and partnership.

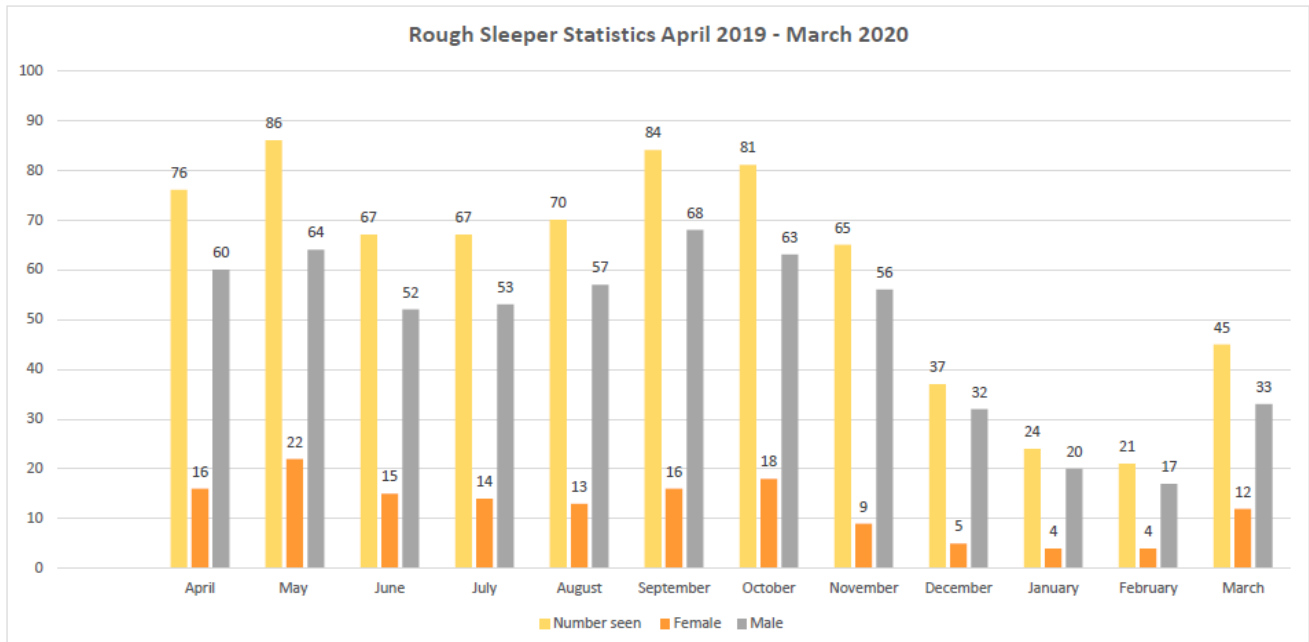
The team carries out early morning outreach sessions, where workers find and engage with those on the street. Our aim is always to support people to come off the street, which often entails supporting people, directly, and linking them with other support and accommodation.

In 2019/20 our team evidenced 340 people sleeping rough in Plymouth.

-  277, male
-  63, female
-  238 had a local connection to Plymouth

There was an evident decrease in the numbers of people out towards the end of 2019, when the Winter night shelter opened. Run by BCHA, this had twelve beds in communal space for people to stay overnight, increasing accommodation options for people at risk of sleeping rough.

We also had to invoke the severe weather protocol (SWEP) twice during the year, providing emergency indoor overnight space for people who were out (again, shared communal space: usually a large room for people, to bed down safely in). Once was for the extreme rain and wind in August and once in early December because of the cold weather. We are grateful to the Plymouth Soup Run for being such a vital partner in that (and much else), and Shekinah for providing its building.



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 BCHA and Shekinah each contributing a member of staff.

Each worker is allocated a small case load of people to work with on a one-to-one intensive basis, to support rough sleeping clients into their own accommodation. They continue to support them to help sustain their tenancy and address any additional needs that may otherwise cause the client to return to the streets.

During 2019/20

- 📌 52 people received ongoing support
- 📌 24 were supported into their own accommodation

A key development in early 2019 was us opening our MARS House. This is specific accommodation for MARS clients who were struggling in alternative forms of housing. This accommodation is supported by the MARS staff to upskill the residents while supporting them around their physical, mental and substance misuse issues. It's a model like no other in Plymouth in that we will work alongside people, in a residential setting, while working on harm reduction and support them to live a healthier life.

Case study

T has lived in the UK for 16 years and was self-employed, he became homeless around 3 years ago from a relationship breakdown. T had no recourse to public funds and no passport or ID. Due to alcohol addiction, he had memory loss.

Under MARS we created a support plan including getting T some ID via the Polish embassy. We then had to apply for settled status, which was a lengthy and complicated process. However, in December 2019 T became very ill and was admitted to hospital, he was due to be released after two weeks but returning him to the street would affect his health further so he was then placed in a Path Resettlement house with support from the Temporary Accommodation fund from MHCLG. We have managed to support T's needs on donations (Provide Devon, Shekinah, Soup Run).

T's settled status application is in place and waiting for the final confirmation. Once this is confirmed he will finally be able to claim benefits and begin a fresh start, something he has waited so long to achieve.



Housing Support for women

For the last three years we have been glad to offer support specifically to women engaged in the criminal justice system and vulnerable to homelessness thanks to funding from Lloyds Bank Foundation, funding which ended in September 2019.

- 📌 16 women were open to the service and supported between April 2019 and Sept 2019, when unfortunately our funding for this service ended
- 📌 3 of these ladies continued to receive support from our Housing Support Workers in our HISS team after September as they still required support going forward
- 📌 10 of these ladies moved into secure, permanent accommodation and/or maintained their tenancies. 1 moved into supported housing. 3 No longer required the service and 2 returned to custody.

Resettlement

Our Resettlement service provides temporary accommodation to single people who are homeless. We run an increasing number of shared houses in the community, as accessible accommodation for people who need somewhere short term, enabling people to be safe and secure while we help them plan for their own accommodation.

The scheme is completely self-funded from the rental income, from houses we run completely ourselves and some where Reestart is the landlord but we do the housing management. People can stay for up to 6 months, but the average length of stay is much less.

Numbers

- 📌 287 people housed in year
- 📌 169 people who moved on successfully
- 📌 16 weeks average stay

Housing advice and support

We continue to provide information, advice and on-going support to single people in Plymouth who are vulnerable to homelessness, especially people with complex needs such as health issues and offending histories.

We offer advice via a twice weekly drop in and individual support for people. Access into the support element is via the drop in or referral from another agency.

The Advice Team provides a range of services including:

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

If people need further support, our housing support workers work can work with them for a period of up to six months to help secure/maintain accommodation.

- 📌 554 people received housing advice
- 📌 82 people housed

Case Studies

1. R came to the drop-in in Aug 19. He had been given a notice and was at risk of losing his accommodation due to anti-social behaviour (ASB): his flat had been cuckooed by drug dealers.

We worked with his housing officer and managed to negotiate R keeping his tenancy; but he had to commit to some changes which he has adhered to. R has been issued a notice to seek possession and if there are any issues within a year R will be asked to leave the property.

R has many debts at this property; and previous properties due to his complex needs. Due to R's mental health we have to take things slowly. We have managed to address his electric bills and made a payment plan for ongoing electric and his arrears.

R has been engaging with Harbour and is now stable on Subutex – he has clean screens from Harbour and is rightly proud of himself. R has also started a course at Shekinah, attends 3 days a week plastering and working towards his CSCS card.

2. N was referred by probation. She was homeless and sofa-surfing with her mother after leaving London to make a better life for her and her children. Unfortunately N's children were taken into care due to substance misuse and offending behaviour. N suffers from PTSD, severe anxiety and depression.

We managed to get N went into Path temporary accommodation in May 2019 and she maintained her room there. We then referred to the Path Renting Support Service who offered her a deposit guarantee (DG). We began looking at 1 bed properties and N moved into her flat in August 19. We set up a DD for her top up of rent and for her DG savings payments; and has never failed to make a payment. N does have a budget and sticks to it to the best of her ability. We applied to PIP for with her and this was granted, maximizing her income.

N engages well with her probation worker and Path. She has just completed a Counselling Programme with Harbour, and is now engaging with the Sunflower Project – working on her personal development and her relationships with others.

We are waiting for benevolent funds so we can furnish her flat how she wants it to make it a welcoming place for her children. N does have contact with all 3 of her children and one of her goals is to have the 2 youngest back home with her.

3. K came to drop-in in June 2019. She was pregnant and living in a room in a shared house with all males, often using illicit substances. She had some arrears as she was on a zero hours contract on UC and this made it difficult for her to pay rent. We made an application to the Vicars Relief Fund to clear the arrears to enable K to access social housing, and to alleviate the loss of rental income to the LL, who has been very supportive of K's situation.

We also facilitated access to food parcels, and bus tickets to get to Derriford Hospital. K had already registered for social housing but nothing was happening. We supported her and went with her to make a homeless approach and assisted her with bidding for 2 bed properties, requesting supporting evidence to do this from Midwife and Health Visitor.

K was offered a viewing for a Sanctuary flat, which she loved. DHP agreed to pay half of the rent in advance with the rest coming from what was left over from the Vicars Relief Fund money we had secured.

Sanctuary provided decorating vouchers and we applied to benevolent funds who awarded £1500. K has had carpets fitted and friends helped her to decorate.



Housing Support

24/6/2020

[0 Comments](#)

Author

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Life's complicated and none of us know what's around the corner. But we do know that it's harder for people with fewer resources (less money, less security) to cope with difficult events. We also know that the biggest determining factor in homelessness is childhood poverty. In other words, people who grew up poor are far more likely to experience homelessness. And homelessness marginalises people, makes it hard for them to have control of their lives and affects health and well-being.

Archives

[June 2020](#)

[May 2020](#)

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 Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement Scheme (SVPR) 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 2019/20:

- 📌 Clients supported into temporary accommodation: 31
- 📌 Clients helped to move into tenancies in the private rented sector (PRS): 29
- 📌 Clients helped to move into Social housing: 9
- 📌 Family reunion cases supported: 5

Renting Support Service (RSS)

We believe that a vital way to prevent and homelessness for people is to have a scheme to help people get private rented accommodation. For Plymouth that's our Renting Support Service (RSS). 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.

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 2019/20:

- 214 people were assisted into private rented accommodation last year
- 184 of those opened credit union accounts to save towards their deposit

In addition, the team provides:

- a weekly property bulletin, going out to over 100 staff members, many across the Alliance (with positive feedback about it enabling move on)
- tenancy training to Alliance and other staff, in line with both the Alliance Accommodation Strategy and workforce development commitments

Another part of the service is **Enhanced Young Persons Housing Support**, also funded by Plymouth City Council. We assist care leavers, and young people aged 18-24 moving on from specific supported accommodation. 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 44 people during the year, each provided with 12 months support following move in to the property – the same as the core PRSS service. Our clients for this young people's service saved £5,400 with the credit union towards the future.

We also now run a specific '**Offender' Renting Support Service**, primarily aimed at helping people who have been through the criminal justice system to secure housing.

In 2019/20, 81 people were given housing advice and we moved 24 people into private rented accommodation.

Renting Support case studies

Case Study 1

C initially came to Path from START; he is a refugee. He moved into a shared house with a deposit guarantee (DG) and rent in advance. Shortly after the move into his new property he started working but his hours were very irregular and payments were therefore also. He had a small amount of rent arrears and we assisted him to begin to pay these off and set up a budgeting and payment plan.

The agent then asked everyone to leave all of their properties as they were closing.

We assisted him to move into a new room by applying to a fund for £350 for his rent in advance and swapped over the DG. We supported him with all the paperwork surrounding the move.

He came to Path quite a bit during his 12 months support to advise us how his tenancy was going, including repairs required; we had a good relationship with him.

We advised his landlord when repairs were required and we also gave advice on bill payments and managing his monies. On his last visit we advised him his Deposit Guarantee was ending and that we would transfer his savings that were in the Credit Union to the letting agent.

Case Study 2

B, in his twenties, approached Path at a HISS drop in. He had been asked by a relative to leave her property by the end of that month due to his mum taking over his room – he had been living with her for 6 months. He has learning difficulties and mental health issues.

Prior to living with this relative, for 14 years he lived with his father, who financially exploited him by spending his benefits. DWP stepped in and moved him temporarily to live with the other relative, though it seemed quite a hostile environment for him.

B admitted to not being good with money and not understanding anything related to private rentals. So, we offered to go to viewings with him, and would sit down and work through all documents with him.

We offered him a DG but very suddenly he was thrown out of his house and so was immediately housed by our Resettlement team. He was given a bedding pack and taken to the property.

We secured funds for essential belongings and booked viewings for him, attending these with him, supporting him to move into a new property.

His tenancy is going really well and he started working again.

Easylet

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

It's therefore a service that increases access to accommodation for people vulnerable to homelessness by working with, advising and supporting landlords. A key part of the role is also to source private rented housing for refugees from Syria coming through the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement (VPR) Scheme.

Easylet Families

Easylet contacts private landlords, or respond to enquiries, to give advice about letting, and about property standards, and to offer potential tenants. At any time there are between 70 and 90 properties housing families that were brought on by Easylet, with the agent or landlord managing the tenancy – once it's established – but support available from our team.

Easylet Singles

In June 2019, two new members of staff were taken on to run the 'Easylet Singles' service.

The primary focus for this service is securing and supporting shared housing for single people presenting as homeless. Houses taken on may go on to be managed by PH4L or managed by their owners or other agents.

In the first six months of the service:

- 58 units of accommodation were secured (33 with PH4L)
- 47 people supported into accommodation brought on by the service
- 14 properties inspected
- 35 enquiries from landlords followed up

Case studies

No 75. A very large 5 bed house with lounge, dining room and separate breakfast room taken on to the Easylet scheme. The owner inherited the property from her father but had been empty for 3 years.

Upon visiting the property we gave advice with regards what works would need to be done; and what certificates secured; gave advice about the scheme and what rents could achieve and advised where we would look for tenants for her. The landlady had the whole house redecorated, one of the 2 bathrooms and the kitchen renewed. We were able to move a lady and her children in from PCC temporary accommodation who were fleeing domestic abuse.

No 6. Previously let out to students for many years, the landlord wanted to hand over the management of the flat so signed up to both Easylet and the Syrian scheme. A grant of £250 was used to fix window handles, have an EPC carried out and have the property deep cleaned. The family that had been matched included two under 25s and their grandfather. They were matched to the property as it is ground floor but the bathroom was not suitable for his needs. START had to call in the occupational therapist (OT) dept. to assess the family's needs. We liaised with PCC, the OT and the landlord at the property and it was agreed to remove the dividing wall between the WC and the bathroom and make a larger wet room so that the family were better supported to assist their elderly grandfather. These works are ongoing.

Landlord Feedback

"How you have managed with your team from beginning to end has been both personal and very efficient."

"We have been very happy with all our dealings with (Path worker), calls are returned promptly, enquiries are dealt with comprehensively and she has gone way beyond the remit of her role in helping us on many occasions."

Other support for clients

Everyone moving into our temporary accommodation is offered a bedding pack of their own. In addition, we provided bedding packs to a number of other clients, funded from money donated and degenerated:

- 57 double bedding packs

- 10 single bedding packs
- 31 tenancy starter packs

Funds generated for clients

- Ben funds received 2019-20: £64,809
- Donations & Gift Aid received: £10,916
- Fundraising: £989

Plymouth Frontline Network

Path is pleased to be a member of the national Frontline Network and a partner of St Martin's In The Fields, which runs it. With funding from St Martin's, we run a local network for staff who support people vulnerable to homelessness.

One focus for the Network continues to be how to support the health & well-being of those working on the frontline in homelessness and related fields in Plymouth. The activity of the group is very much based around the interests and needs of its members. There are meetings of the group but also training sessions, with guest speakers, usually responding to issues raised by members directly or through surveys we carry out.

Training and talks have been supported by Shelter and Clinks, amongst others, with training on solution-focused communication and group sessions on access to accommodation. There are also regularly newsletters we send out to a wide membership, sharing news, developments and good practice.

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.

Income

Path's biggest single funder is Plymouth City Council, from its own funds and from monies received locally from central government (MHCLG). Much of that funding now comes via The Plymouth Alliance, our Rough Sleeper, Housing Advice and Renting Support work all sitting within that contract.

We also received funding from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, as well as the National Probation Service and the local Community Rehabilitation Company (KSS), all supporting our private rented work for offenders. Charitable funders in this period included: Lloyds Bank Foundation 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.

With fund-raising, we are lucky and grateful to have the support of various community groups and enterprises, who voluntarily raise or donate funds to help our clients, including The Penguin Pub in Plymouth.

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

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 now 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 1300 followers. We use our account to share news and information about Path, partners, housing and homelessness. You can follow us **@PathDevon**.



PH4L

Path set up and has then owned PH4L (Plymouth Homes4Let social letting agency). PH4L is a separate company, providing access to settled accommodation for people facing homelessness. At the end of March 2020, Path supported PH4L to become a Community Interest Company (CIC) and become independent, so that is run purely as a local social enterprise.

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

Chief Executive Officer

Mr M Taylor

Trustees/Directors in 2019/20

Mr D Millar (Chair)
Mr C. McClellan
Ms N Sarlaka
Mr G W Wheeler
Ms J Laing
Mr L Budge

Registered Company Number

4478819

Registered Charity Number

1097772

Contact Tel: 01752 255889

Email: info@pathdevon.org

Funding Partners



Path Services in 2020

Services that we currently provide the following services in Plymouth:

- **Support for Rough Sleepers**

We support people who are sleeping rough to move off the street. That includes assertive outreach work, plus intensive support from a multi-agency team we coordinate.

- **Resettlement Scheme**

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

- **Housing Advice and Support**

We provide housing information and individual support to people who are single and homeless, including people using mental health, drugs and criminal justice services.

- **Refugee Integration Service**

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

- **Access to Private Rented Housing**

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

- **Easylet**

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.