



Impact Report 2022/23

SIGNPOSTS

People experiencing homelessness are some of the most marginalised and vulnerable in our society and today many are facing hugely challenging circumstances the intensity and complexity of which haven't been seen in their lifetime.

In 2020, the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic saw the government mandate extraordinary action to get everyone in the UK into safe emergency accommodation. However, across the UK, a lot of people facing homelessness have struggled immensely over the past three years. Many have seen their mental health decline because of the chaos and uncertainty of the pandemic and cost of living crisis now engulfing the country. An increasing proportion of people accessing our services have significant mental ill health, combined with this more people are struggling with substance and alcohol use.

Since the Covid-19 pandemic the level of Local Authority funding has significantly reduced, and we are expecting this to further reduce over the coming 18 months. This is during what can only be termed as a housing crisis in Luton with 1 in 65 people in Luton allocated a homeless status and the national level of 1 in 100 children in unsecure or temporary accommodation.

So the stark reality is we are seeing the levels of need significantly increase whilst the available funding is equally significantly reducing. These are direct results of political decisions made at central government and Signposts along with the sector are continuing to lobby for the people we are here to support.

Homelessness is also extremely likely to also become a larger long-term issue as well. It is widely accepted that Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are a significant contributor to homelessness, and the factors above, plus two years of lockdown and school closures indicate a potential tsunami of ACEs in the future.

So, it is with all of this in mind that Signposts thoroughly backs the Luton 2040 Vision and the following priorities:

1. Building an inclusive economy that delivers investment to support the growth of businesses, jobs and income.
2. Improving population wellbeing and tackling health inequalities to enable everyone to have a good quality of life and reach their full potential.
3. Becoming a child friendly town, where our children grow up happy, healthy and secure, with a voice that matters and the opportunities they need to thrive.
4. Tackling the climate emergency and becoming a net zero town with sustainable growth and a healthier environment.
5. Supporting a strong and empowered community, built on fairness, local pride and a powerful voice for all our residents.

We remain 100% committed to our community and I would like to express my eternal gratitude to our fantastically talented and committed teams who continue despite all these pressures to deliver our services.

Tim Archbold CEO



2022-23 was a year for consolidation and stability at Signposts. We have maintained our housing related support services across Luton and Central Bedfordshire with great effect.

Working in partnership with Luton Borough Council and through the Rough Sleeper Initiative we have dedicated beds in our Guildford Hall service to provide somewhere safe to stay for anyone sleeping rough in Luton.

We have developed our 3-year strategic vision taking us forward to 2026 to ensure the ongoing relevance of the services we provide.

As I start my tenure as Chair of Trustees at Signposts, I would like to warmly thank my predecessor Carole Vanschagen for her stewardship over the past 2 decades which has left a lasting legacy.

The astounding work of our staff team shows that rough sleeping and homelessness is not an inevitable part of society and that given the right resources, focus and commitment that everyone can have a safe and secure place to live.

David Ball - Chair of the Board



“Elizabeth I don’t cry anymore, I’m so happy now, thank you for always being there to hear me out when I was upset and giving me the right advice to get myself sorted”



“Thank you Signposts for pushing me and making me a better Person”



“Thank Angela for me, as she always made sure I stayed on top of things and made better choices”



375

clients supported in 2022/23

What We Do

Signposts supports people who are experiencing homelessness in Luton and Dunstable from the street to independent living.

Our services include residential and supporting services for those who, for many reasons and circumstances, are unable to find suitable accommodation to meet their needs. We achieve this via our 4 stages of accommodation.

We currently have a portfolio of 11 properties in Luton, Dunstable and Houghton Regis that provide safe and supportive accommodation for up to 167 residents at any one time.

We work within a Trauma Informed Care (TIC) and Psychologically Informed Environment (PIE) approach which basically means we focus more on the underlying trauma that caused an individual to become homeless rather than their homeless status. At Signposts we find this approach vital if we are to truly empower an individual to succeed with independent living.

Togetherness.

Being proud to be part of Signposts. Recognising the strengths of each individual while acknowledging we can accomplish more together.

Happiness.

Creating a positive can-do environment by choosing happiness to enjoy every day.

Innovate.

Generating an environment where all ideas are relevant and possibilities are endless.

Respectful.

A belief that all individuals are full of potential and skills, deserving to be respected and to give their respect in return.

Inspirational.

Contributing to an energetic, creative and encouraging atmosphere which enables us all to meet our aspirational goals.

Our values



#TeamSP

The ethos of #TeamSP is that anyone can contribute their time and skills to support the local community.

Working in partnership with community groups we provide exciting and inventive ways our clients can volunteer their time and grow in confidence.

Our aspiration for Team SP is to be able to offer workshops, permanent volunteering opportunities and even apprenticeships for our clients, to help them learn vital skills and be able to truly thrive as participating members of their community.

Some of the events attended

- Love Luton Run Fest
- Bradgers Hill
- Eid Festival Lessey Park
- Houghton Rocks
- Stopsley Christmas Festival
- Stockwood Park





**“I’m proud of
being part of
something
great”**

Paul’s Story

My dad left when I was 3 but my early life felt normal, however when I was 10, I started to go downhill. I had a bad stutter and that was a challenge for me as I felt left out in most things it stopped me making friendships and getting jobs but mostly it messed up my confidence in so many ways, but music saved me and taught me how to manage my speech.

Unfortunately, I then started hanging around with the wrong people and getting in trouble. I stopped going to school and by the time I was 15 I was addicted to pills, alcohol and weed. During this time, I became a dad. I tried my best to stop taking for him but kept messing up time after time. I then got addicted to coke and was bad for 6 - 7 years.

Over time I lost everything, family, friends. I then tried crack but didn’t like it thank God! I spent a lot of time running away from everything and everyone being deceitful and just outright mad and did what I could to feed my habits.

Then one day I woke up after a lifetime of destruction and said to myself, I need to fix things! I suffered with my mental health, anxiety and bad depression but somehow got myself on top of things then I fell off the rails again and was homeless. I got things back to a steady start, but I had nowhere to go so I searched for a solution and found Signpost.

I got myself back on track and in the process of being in supported accommodation I experienced some crazy stuff and saw a lot of people in worse settings than me. I knew from watching the staff that helped me be the person I am today that I can change and do what they do, and I knew deep down inside of me this was what I was meant for.

I did all I could to become who I am today. With the help of staff in James Court I started to help everyone cook, clean, talk to people while juggling my own problems and got clean, it was like a gift from somewhere.

I applied for a job as a bank worker at Signposts and got it, then the same day got a council place. It was like this was what I needed to go through to access my inner person and I have never looked back. Now I work for Signposts as a waking nights concierge.

I’m proud of being a part of something great. It’s been 10 months now (June 2022) and I have never been so happy in what I do. I will always remember where I was and how I could always go back there so I made it a mission to help people coz if you do good, good comes back 10 fold and I live by this every day.



“I just hope you know that you have made me hopeful - I can't thank you enough”

Gemma's Story

Gemma moved to Bedford to be close to her partner. Unfortunately the relationship was very controlling and her partner proved to be very manipulating. This led to both Gemma and her partner moving away from Bedford and they began to sleep rough. The couple were eventually picked up by Noah's outreach team in Leighton Buzzard.

Signposts accepted the couple in to Guildford Hall's SOS accommodation where they were assessed and moved together to one of our supported accommodation projects.

Not long after moving in Gemma disclosed issues of abuse from her partner and staff took immediate action to rehouse her in an alternative accommodation project within our services, and supported Gemma, who has mild learning difficulties to begin the journey of securing her own future.

Over her time at Signposts Gemma began making friends and got on really well with staff, she began building her confidence, self esteem & started to create goals for her life. One goal was that she wanted to move to Norfolk to be closer to her birth family. Having sourced suitable supported accommodation, Signposts completed her referral and Gemma was interviewed on Zoom. The interview went really well and Gemma was accepted at her new accommodation and moved just 3 days later with help from Signpost's staff.



During this period...



751

referrals during the year

208

people moved into our accommodation

375

clients supported in 2022/23

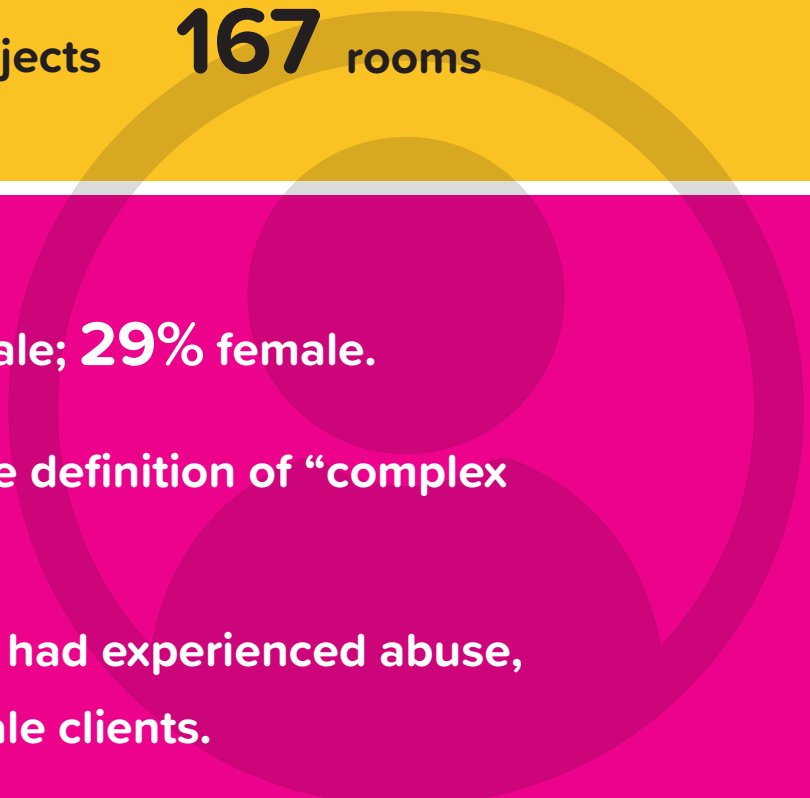
11 accommodation projects

167 rooms

71% of our clients were male; **29%** female.

60% of our clients met the definition of “complex needs”.

50% of our female clients had experienced abuse, compared to **9%** of our male clients.



Over the last few years, we have seen an increasing need for our services. Covid and the “Everyone In” initiative didn’t diminish that – more people lost their jobs, and then their homes due to the pandemic. The war in Ukraine and ever-increasing costs has only exacerbated the issue, and sadly the trend is moving ever upwards.

We received a staggering 751 referrals to our services in 2022/23. We accommodated 208 of those referrals, and in total our team supported 375 individuals throughout the year – helping them to register with a GP, open a bank account, access benefits, engage with other services, start volunteering/employment, get back into education/training, and move on into independent living. This is just the tip of the iceberg though, in terms of the emotional support and encouragement our team offer to the people we work alongside.

What we are seeing more and more is an increase in the people coming to us who are experiencing severe and multiple disadvantage, sometimes referred to as “complex needs”. This means people who have experience of 2 or more of the following areas, in addition to their homelessness:

- Mental ill health
- Physical ill health
- Addiction
- Involvement with the criminal justice system
- Violence or abuse

Supporting people with some or all of these issues can be challenging for our staff, and we ensure they all have access to reflective practice, emotional support and our Employee Assistance Programme. We are also grateful for the partnership working across Luton, enabling our staff to work alongside other agencies to provide the best person-centred support we can.

The past few years have seen an increase in the number of women approaching our services – in 2022/23, women made up almost 30% of our clients. We know that women’s experiences of homelessness – both the root causes and the lived reality - are often very separate from those of men. Women are considerably more likely to have experienced some form of violence, trauma, harm, or abuse within their life course. This is why not just a trauma-informed approach, but also a gender-informed approach to support is so important



Sam Price - Deputy CEO

Finances

	2022/23	2021/22
Income	3,386,536	3,354,554
Expenditure	3,425,304	3,367,296
Net income/(expenditure)	(38,768)	(12,742)
Total funds	1,053,460	1,092,228

Finance and accounts review

As at 31st March 2023, the charity has £1,078,758 of assets less current liabilities, of which £781,129 are fixed assets. The charity has £153,044 of cash balances.

The charity aims to achieve break-even between the operating income and expenditure at its projects. Any surpluses are used in subsequent years to improve and expand the services provided to clients.

Donors & Partners

We would like to thank the following for their support.

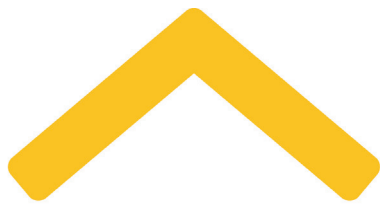
Natalie Roukin Interiors
Pi Accountants
JM Plumbing Services
Seven Miles Financial Services
Chaiiwala
High Beeches Primary School
The Hygiene Bank
Luton Rotary Club
BLCF
Diane Malone
Hopkins Electrical Services
Striking Places Ltd
The M Solution

Orchid Property Group
Morewood Payroll Services Ltd
Fifteen Three Digital
Fuller Pubs
B&Q
Dallow Primary School
Screwfix
Garfield Weston
Sam Whaley
Pinchin Architects
BLS IT Computer Solutions
Allegro Blinds

And of course all our monthly 100x10 supporters.



THANK
YOU!



SIGNPOSTS

Ending Homelessness

Building Roads to a Brighter Future

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