



Southend's Homeless Charity

Empowering people to move away
from rough sleeping for good.

STRATEGIC PLAN

2023-2028

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VISION, MISSION, VALUES

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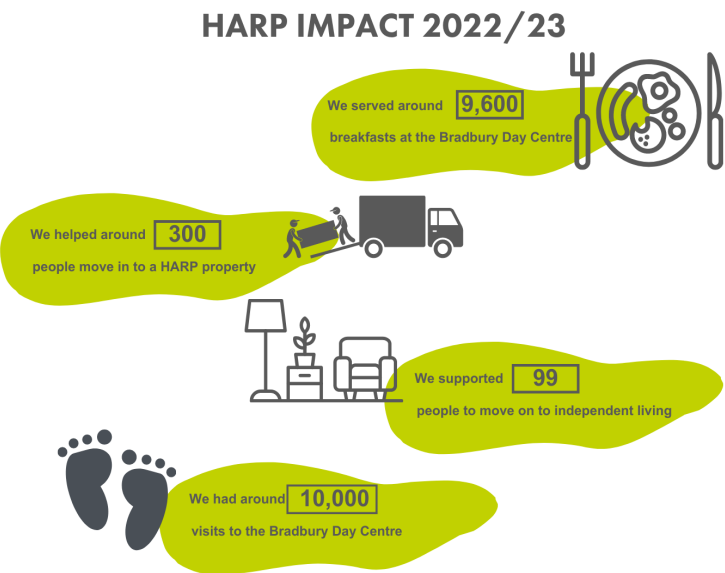
INTRODUCTION

WHO ARE WE AND WHAT DO WE DO?

HARP was formed in July 2002, and incorporated on 18th October that year as a Charitable Company. This followed the merger of two existing homeless organisations - a day centre and night shelter, which had been in operation in Southend since 1987.

In 2009, HARP merged with Acorn Housing Association. Currently, HARP offers 264 units of accommodation and is working to continue to increase its housing portfolio to meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness in Southend. By the end of 2023/24, HARP's total available bed spaces are expected to reach c.300.

HARP offers a critical lifeline to the most vulnerable people



experiencing homelessness in Southend-on-Sea. With bedspaces specifically setup to accommodate rough sleepers 'straight from the street'. Our outreach teams are out daily, working to identify people they find bedded down and offering opportunities for them to come directly into our accommodation. Once settled, the real transformative work can begin.

As well as making sure individuals' primary needs are met, we seek to build good quality, restorative, supportive relationships. We work to identify the root causes of each individuals' homelessness and any factors that that may interfere with them being able to live independently. We enable people to work with us to address those things, as well as the inevitable side-effects of rough sleeping. Our ultimate aim is to move people on and into independent living. Our practice model is psychologically informed, designed to enable those we work with (including those who are multiply disadvantaged and 'hard to reach') an opportunity to re-establish themselves within their local community and prevent a return to homelessness. Southend has a vibrant, strong and supportive voluntary network which we are very proud to play a part of. We build bridges for our clients back into the community to enable long lasting and sustained changes to take place for them.



"It is very satisfying to see clients develop from someone who may have lost direction in life to being ready to live independently and receiving a set of keys to their own home"
Prakash, HARP Project Worker



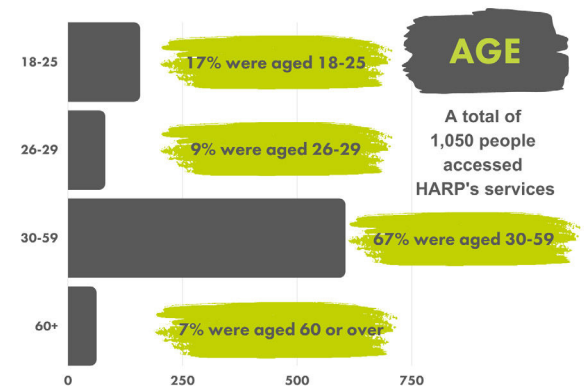
"Sometimes you just need someone to say 'I believe in you'"
Jack, former HARP client

CONTEXT IN WHICH WE ARE WORKING

Central Government made a commitment to end rough sleeping by 2027. Within the political, social, economic and environmental environments that we work, the core aim of the Government's rough sleeping strategy aligns with our own. Yet we believe, whilst we will have some success in delivering on our plan. The short-term and transient nature of Government funding may undermine its own goals. With the cost-of-living crisis deepening, the impact of the war in Ukraine, and political infighting. The drain on resources is expected to continue. With competing demands restricting the financial support for local authorities that is needed for investment in key areas, such as housing, health and social care services.

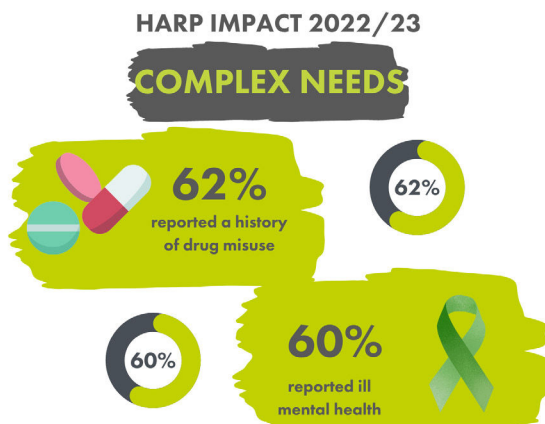
In the city of Southend-on-Sea, we have seen the number of people forced in to street homelessness slowly creep back up from the lower pandemic figures. The official street count figure for 2022 rose to 16 from

HARP IMPACT 2022/23

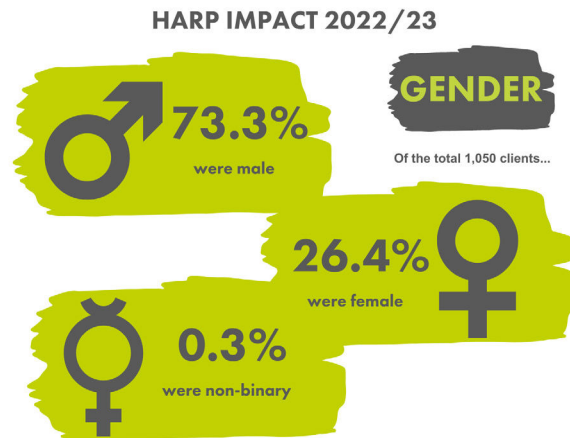


the 10 recorded in 2021 in Southend. This is a significant increase but also should be noted still falls short of the numbers actually reported by our Outreach Team, who regularly count 20+ people on a night-by-night basis. We also know there are c.50 former rough sleepers (many of whom have complex needs) housed unstably in temporary B&B-style accommodation. We believe this to be a contributory factor to the changeable numbers we see, as some of those continue to bounce between the accommodation and the street. We also see cyclical presentations with generic temporary unsupported placements often breaking down and people forced in to returning to rough sleeping.

Another indicator we use to assess the level of need are presentations at our Bradbury Day Centre. In 2022/23 we saw 1,050 presentations to the Day Centre for support. This shows a steady rise from 1016 in 21/22 and 852 in 20/21. Of those we saw, 17% had multiple and complex needs, 60% had active substance misuse issues, and 64%



reported mental ill health. These figures mirror the steady inclines we are seeing in people needing our help. Our data shows us a significant spike in short-term rough sleepers and those newer to the street. We have seen 19% of out of city referrals versus 17% in 2021/22, with a spike of 13% compared



to 6% last year coming in from wider Essex.

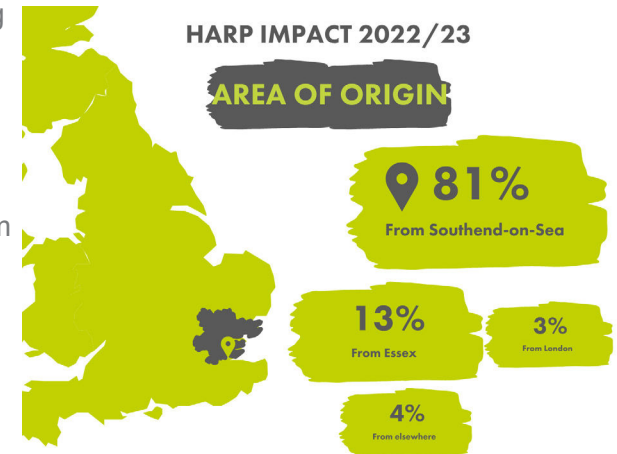
In the last year we have 'turned away' 134 people, a steady incline which is up from last year's 114. We have a .5 increase in those being turned away multiple times with 6 times being the average. Our new five-year strategy will seek to address that trend. With a refreshed Mission and Vision that capitalises on HARP's unique position to focus support on the most excluded and disadvantaged within our community - those forced to sleep rough.

We will continue to invest in and develop our accommodation, balancing our stock of owned units with good quality leased units enables us to be agile in adapting to needs as they develop and change.

We do not perceive there will be any reduction in the level of Need over the next 5 years. HARP's approach to tackling the issue and ending the need for Rough Sleeping in Southend is to work with a core of 300 high quality, service appropriate beds to support the work of the HARP service team.

The emphasis of practice within the Service to focus on throughput. Engaging with the most entrenched rough sleepers with the highest need and vulnerability and concentrating establishing options for those individuals to return to independent living as soon as they are able.

By increasing successful throughput, with continued support outside of HARP accommodation, HARP can ensure that their accommodation can always be helping those of greatest need. HARP will be placing an increased emphasis on partnership working and Community engagement to support this service approach.



*"They listen, they encourage,
they are compassionate, and
they don't judge you."
Joinah, former HARP client*



HOW ARE WE GOING TO GET THERE?

STRATEGIC AIM 1

REDUCE THE NEED FOR ROUGH SLEEPING IN SOUTHEND-ON-SEA

We will:

- Improve and expand our straight-from-the-street bed spaces, in order to enable quick and sustained exit options from rough sleeping.
- Achieve our goal of 60% owned stock, capitalise on future opportunities for grant supported ownership.
- Diversify our landlord relationships to enable best quality of leased housing options.

STRATEGIC AIM 2

DEVELOP & DELIVER SERVICES THAT SUPPORT LONG-TERM RECOVERY FROM HOMELESSNESS

We will:

- Develop an evidence base for HARP's approach, the systems to measure our impact, and use our data to influence national homelessness policy.
- Consolidate and strengthen partnerships with community groups to enable efficient and best practice for service delivery.
- Develop and publish HARP's pathway model including a specialism for floating support and Hybrid Housing First approaches.
- Co-design our peer programs, utilising the strengths of lived experience to guide organisational development.
- Build on HARP's existing meaningful activities program to include all stages of recovery and a new focus on employability.

STRATEGIC AIM 3

INVEST IN AND STRENGTHEN OUR WORKFORCE TO MAINTAIN AGILE & EFFECTIVE TEAMS

We will:

- Review how we deliver value for money, protect and maximise our income to include 100% cost recovery.
- Plan for investment in workforce development including volunteers. With training, equipping and looking after staff & volunteer wellbeing.
- Review our pay, reward and recognition package to ensure we are setting the bar above sector averages and enable better staff retention.

STRATEGIC AIM 4

ENHANCE & CONTRIBUTE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOUTHEND'S COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS FOR THE BENEFIT OF OUR CLIENTS

We will:

- Develop and fund an integrated hub offer, which includes partnerships for the delivery of preventative & homelessness support.
- Develop better long-term strategic corporate and community relationships.
- Build a bank of community supporters and activists to support our mission.



WHAT'S NEXT?

The strategic five-year plan sets out the overarching pillars for the detailed annual corporate business plan. We have set out our aims to enable us to grow a strong organisation with investment in our people, place, property and practice. In the first year of this strategy (23/24) we will prioritise a review of systems and governance, financial resilience including fundraising, partnerships, impact and outcomes.

