

IMPACT REPORT

2021/22



**SHELTER**

**WE EXIST TO
DEFEND THE
RIGHT TO A
SAFE HOME
AND FIGHT THE
DEVASTATING
IMPACT THE
HOUSING
EMERGENCY
HAS ON PEOPLE
AND SOCIETY.**



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AN INTRODUCTION FROM POLLY NEATE, SHELTER CHIEF EXECUTIVE

For many of us, the past year has been a time of recovery from the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. But for those who look to us for help, there has been no reprieve.

Across our face-to-face services, our emergency helpline and our webchat, almost 50,000 people received information, advice and support to defend their right to a safe home. That figure alone highlights just how vital your support has been – with so many people still living at the sharp end of the housing emergency.

We are determined to deliver better support to the most vulnerable people in our society. With 17.5 million in Britain – roughly one in three people – now affected by the housing emergency, you've helped us prioritise the most urgent cases, including the introduction of a new triage system that gives clients more time for one-on-one support.

You've also been with us as we have developed our digital service which enables us to meet the needs of the people we support before they reach crisis point. And this is all while we fight nationwide injustice, with successful campaigns resulting in government publishing bills to strengthen the rights of private renters and improve the regulation of social housing, whilst also committing to build more social homes.

At Shelter, we're continuing to put lived experience of homelessness at the heart of everything we do. From the success of our GROW traineeship programme (**see page 9**), to making strides toward becoming an anti-racist organisation, we are creating long-term change and real action to challenge the deep social injustices that perpetuate the cycle of homelessness.

It's only with the help of partners and donors like you that we can keep building our movement. Here, we are going to share three examples to show how your commitment is fighting the housing emergency, and how you can continue to protect the futures of the thousands more who are denied the right to a safe home.

From everyone here at Shelter, thank you.



OUR YEAR AT A GLANCE

ACROSS OUR SERVICES IN ENGLAND IN 2021/22

17,281

households received support from our emergency helpline

15,478

households came to our local hubs in England for support

5.1 MILLION

visits made to our online advice and services pages in England

17,099

conversations through our webchat service

Our justice services assisted

3,598
CASES

Our professional advice services responded to

15,012
QUERIES

Our legal advice service worked with

3,104
HOUSEHOLDS

THANKS TO SUPPORT FROM SHELTER'S HUBS OR EMERGENCY HELPLINE

65%

of households saw a positive change in their housing situation

60%

of homeless households found somewhere to live

61%

of households with financial difficulties saw their financial situation improve

55%

of households who were having an issue with their landlord or tenancy saw an improvement

WORKING TOGETHER WITH FAMILIES



In a time when the cost-of-living crisis is hitting families hard, it doesn't take much bad luck for things to spin out of control. So often, the system that is meant to help falls short. This is where our Family Services offer an holistic approach to defending the right to a safe home.

And that's because its never homelessness on its own that these families are having to endure. Many have survived traumatic abuse, have poor mental health, or substance misuse issues.

In Bristol and Sheffield, our hubs discovered that local organisations were not linking up around women and their families, leaving them to fall through the gaps.

With the backing of our partners at BBC Children in Need, the Garfield

Weston Foundation and The Liz & Terry Bramall Foundation, our Family and Children Services have been addressing these problems by providing whole-family support to women and children. Since April 2021, our services in Bristol and Sheffield have worked with 164 families, including 425 children.

Aisha's* family is just one them, and her journey is an example of what is possible when people with lived experience of homelessness are at the centre of the solution.

*name has been changed to protect their identity

CHILDREN HELPED BY OUR SERVICES IN BRISTOL AND SHEFFIELD NOTED IMPROVEMENTS IN THE AREAS OF MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH, SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND OF FEELING SAFE.

Being healthy



% of children who answered that health was not a cause of worry

Getting the most out of life



% of children who answered that they were able to enjoy life and develop skills for adulthood

Feeling safe



% of children who answered that they felt safe and protected from harm in their home environment and local community



My worries seem small or no longer there at all.

YOUR SUPPORT IN ACTION

As a devoted mother, Aisha lights up when she talks about her four kids. All she wants is for her children to be happy, settled, and safe. But life has not been easy for her family.

When we first met Aisha, she was living in temporary accommodation, sharing a kitchen, one toilet and a shower with several other families. Her eldest son was being bullied. Aisha herself was suffering from depression and anxiety, as well as facing language barriers. Her family didn't feel safe. But despite working with the council for a long time, they couldn't find a suitable home anywhere else.

Through a Health Visitor, Aisha was referred to our specialist Family and Children Service. That's when she met Lucy, one of our support workers. Lucy provided Aisha with space to talk about her son's bullying, her own mental health, and the challenges the family faced in accessing a more permanent home. All of this meant that Aisha and her children were being supported holistically – they didn't have to retell their story to lots of different people or organisations.

Immediately, Lucy supported Aisha to view a social housing property, and empowered her to take the first step to a better future for her family. The property

was exactly what Aisha's family needed and after accepting the offer, our Family Services team helped her to apply for funding to turn their house into a home. Jane, our DIY Skills Adviser – funded by B&Q – worked with Aisha to give her the skills and confidence to do home improvements, meaning her children could have their rooms decorated for the first time in their lives.

As a result of our support, Aisha and her children are now settled in a house that they can call home. She's confident in managing her tenancy and finances independently, and being comfortable in her new home has helped her mental health. She's made friends and feels part of the community. It's helped her take steps towards no longer feeling isolated and scared.

Through our joined-up approach to supporting families, mothers like Aisha have agency, even in times of urgent need.

Working together, we listen and learn from the families we support, gaining valuable insights into the issues that they are facing. By supporting these services, you are helping us to improve systems at a local level and reach people before the point of homelessness.

TURNING LIVES AROUND



People who face homelessness often encounter huge barriers when looking for work. This year, the support of generous individuals and partners has been the driving force behind our Getting Real Opportunities of Work (GROW) traineeship – a vocational programme that empowers people to turn their lives around.

With opportunities in a range of service, campaigning and research roles, GROW provides paid employment for individuals who have been homeless.

Reinforcing our commitment to putting lived experience at the heart of everything we do, our GROW trainees bring unique knowledge and skills that are crucial to the way we work.

Together, we're able to improve the way we operate across teams, maximising resources in the most efficient way we can to make the biggest possible difference for people facing homelessness.



YOUR SUPPORT IN ACTION

Jane* joined the GROW programme in 2020 and below, she recounts the difference the programme has made to her life:

'My car was my home for nearly a year. After a traumatic and unhealthy relationship breakdown, I became homeless abruptly – no house keys, no bank cards, no belongings.

I couldn't get help from the council - on paper I had the house and should have been able to afford somewhere to live. But there wasn't the consideration that I didn't have any access to my finances.

I'd brush my teeth in public toilets before I went to work and I was so grateful for the generosity of friends who'd let me wash my hair or stay the odd night on their sofa when the weather was bitter.

When I spotted the GROW traineeship job ad, I felt it was made for me. I was in total disbelief. Shelter didn't see my homelessness as a personal failing, but actively valued it.

In June 2020 I joined Shelter as a researcher trainee and it's put my life back on track. My research focuses on young people's experiences of homelessness. I conduct interviews, run community listening workshops and write reports. The role has given me the chance to grow, and I feel like I'm becoming the woman that I should have been before the trauma.

My research is influencing the way Shelter campaigns and supports people, right through to recruitment - I have been on interview panels to hire senior management roles. It has been the most amazing experience and I now have a number of job offers on the table. I'm

*name has been changed to protect their identity



I'm overjoyed that I now get to help other trainees on their journey to work

hoping to go on and do amazing things and a large part of that is down to the GROW traineeship.'

Since writing, Jane has secured a full-time role at Shelter in our Involvement team.

'I'm overjoyed that I now get to help other trainees on their journey to work and also improve outcomes for every single trainee we will have.'

WITH YOUR HELP, WE'LL NURTURE MORE FUTURE TALENT

Since the programme began, 66 people have enrolled, 54 of whom have completed their traineeship and graduated into further employment.

In 2021/22, we had a cohort of 13 people join the programme, supporting our Peer Research, Community Organising and

Marketing teams. Four completed their traineeship in that period.

Right now, public donations and the support of partners such as The Adecco Group, Société Générale and the National Lottery Community Fund are giving our GROW programme national reach.

By funding new traineeship roles and delivering hands-on mentoring, these partners have played a crucial role in empowering more people to unlock their full potential and move into paid employment. This work is changing lives.

FIGHTING A BROKEN SYSTEM

Shelter's Legal Services are on the front line of our fight to defend people's right to safe and secure homes. As well as providing free legal support for people who have lost their homes or are facing eviction, our solicitors fight against injustices that exacerbate the housing emergency.



Last year, our Legal Services worked with over 3,100 households in their fight for a safe home. With your help, we'll keep that vital work going.

YOUR SUPPORT IN ACTION

In the autumn and winter months of 2021, our Legal Services championed the scrapping of a dangerous practice that was making life even more challenging for people who were homeless.

A local council was forcing people to move at a moment's notice from hotel to hotel, with seemingly no care for how they would travel miles across town to the new accommodation.

Our clients could sleep at night, knowing they had somewhere secure to stay.

Frequently, the council wasn't letting people know where they were going next until after 4pm. During the winter, this meant that they were made to wait on the streets in the dark and the cold.

People who were not only experiencing homelessness, but also mental health issues, were being treated in a way which left them in even more unsafe and uncertain situations.

This is what a broken system looks like.

Our Legal Services knew that we had to put a stop to this. The first step was raising the alarm with the council: letting them know that we knew their practice was putting people in danger.

We spoke with people who were being treated in this way and listened to their stories. It was soon clear that this was happening on a much larger scale than anyone could have imagined – so we resolved to speak out and share their stories.

Shelter's solicitors, services team and a local law centre joined forces

to gather more examples of this practice. Using relationships built over the years with council solicitors, we were able to unveil the negative impact it was having on people who were already being let down by the housing system. It was Shelter's insight on this that forced the solicitors to alert their colleagues.

The council responded by providing secure homes, as opposed to hotels, for those who needed it most. Other people were moved into different hotels where they were not at risk of being asked to leave at short notice. Together, Shelter and the council were able to put an end to people being treated this way.

Our clients could sleep at night, knowing they had somewhere secure to stay.

WITH YOUR SUPPORT, THE FIGHT WILL CONTINUE

Preventing further hardship, stress and the threat of a life with no home is what makes every donation count. Your support means that together, we can defend the right to a safe home.

METHODOLOGY

This report is informed by the following:

1

The Outcomes Survey is a quantitative telephone survey that was carried out with approximately 2,000 clients from England by research agency BMG Research. The interviews were conducted at least three months after a case was closed with us (and no more than ten months after case closure).

2

The sample is broadly representative of our total client population, weighted based on type of service received (Advice Support Guidance, legal, emergency helpline or support), and broad geographical regions (North, South and Central). Soft quotas were monitored to match the interview sample broadly to the profile of our clients on the characteristics of age, gender and the client's goal and homelessness status. Each client represents a household, which can contain multiple occupants.

3

The proportion of people who achieved specific outcomes excludes those who said 'Don't know' or 'Too early to say', and the questions were only asked to those who said they had the problem.

4

Data was also gathered from a number of services that collect routine information on outcomes and outputs throughout service use.

5

Internal management information provides the figures on how many people we help each year through our emergency helpline, digital, face-to-face and legal services.

6

The Methodology and Appendices report contains more detailed information.

CONTACT US

To discuss supporting Shelter or to hear more about the projects and services in this report, please get in touch via the following:

For corporate partners:
corporate@shelter.org.uk

For philanthropic partners:
philanthropy@shelter.org.uk

For trusts and foundations:
trusts@shelter.org.uk

For information on leaving a gift in your will:
legacies@shelter.org.uk



We exist to defend the right to a safe home and fight the devastating impact the housing emergency has on people and society.

We believe that home is everything.

shelter.org.uk

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