



Homelessness is increasing nationally and locally. In Chesterfield and the surrounding areas there has been an immense increase in the number of people rough sleeping since 2010 based on figures from the official rough sleeper count.

Homelessness is a very high profile topic at the moment and Pathways of Chesterfield has an excellent reputation in the communities we support along with the relationships we have built with the local councils; our funders; other homeless service providers; and all of the services that we refer our clients to for specific areas of support. We are regular speakers at the Homeless Forum which brings together all of these agencies.

## About us

Since 2006, Pathways has been at the forefront of working to end homelessness in Chesterfield, Bolsover and North East Derbyshire.

Our mission is to eradicate rough sleeping in our community and support those without a permanent a home to obtain and maintain one.

We are the primary homeless service in the area offering a holistic service, looking to address not only an individuals housing situation, but also providing physical and mental health support, emergency food and clothing provisions, and also benefits support and financial difficulty relief.

Pathways is a place of **acceptance, empowerment and change** where clients are given the help, skills and confidence to resolve their issues.

## Our Values

1. We never give up on people
2. We are approachable
3. We empower people
4. We respect people
5. We work collaboratively
6. We continuously work to improve our service

## Our Impact

Last year we supported 880 people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness (this is five times the number of people we were supporting four years ago). We have supported 280 people into accommodation and continue to work tirelessly to ensure more people gain accommodation.

We have also prevented a lot of homelessness by working with people to prevent eviction or, where this can't happen, we have been able to find them alternative accommodation before they were evicted to prevent any actual homelessness.

## Our Service

We offer many different services at Pathways, which all complement our core aim of getting people into accommodation.

### Housing advice and support

This includes completing an assessment and identifying what the barriers are to someone gaining and sustaining accommodation and then care coordinating the support. This often includes work around benefits, mental health, substance misuse, help to reduce or maintain none offending, legal support and referrals to appropriate housing including council, supported and private.



### Specialist Nursing

Our nursing team are qualified mental health nurses and support clients with both crisis and longer term, ongoing, work to improve their wellbeing. Many clients we work with are referred into statutory mental health services but due to difficulty in contacting them, due to homelessness, they often fall through the net. Our nursing team help to bridge this gap. From self-assessment 90% of our clients struggle with their mental health.



The nursing team also support people to access other health services, many of the people we work with haven't attended a health appointment for years. The average life expectancy of a homeless male is 47 whilst the national average is 77 (figures referenced to crisis) showing the desperate need for this client group to be supported to access health care.

### Women Service

Pathways have recently launched a women only element to the support we offer. Women are very underrepresented in accessing homeless services both nationally and locally (research has shown there are not less women who are homeless) Many women who become homeless have sadly experienced abuse and research has shown often will not access homeless services because they feel daunted by the male dominated environments homeless services can often be. Women will often try and sofa surf else where and this can place them in risky situations. We wanted to make Pathways more accessible for women so have launched a women only drop-in and group to run on Thursday afternoons. Dependent on need and the uptake we will increase this.



## Recovery service

Sadly, many of the people we support struggle with substance misuse and have often used substances as a way to numb emotions that are too difficult to deal with or as a way to self-medicate for undiagnosed mental health difficulties. We felt there was more we could do to support people to make changes and move into recovery. Pathways is using a 4 staged approach to support people at all different levels of their move into recovery from motivational and harm reduction work to things to fill their time right through to peer mentoring and volunteering.



## Tenancy support

We provide tenancy support to some of the people we work with, who have more complex needs and might not manage to engage with more generic tenancy support. We support people with anything that might help someone sustain their tenancy. This can include; tenancy set up, benefits, utilities, furniture, engaging in the community, substance misuse, mental health and debt.

## Provisions

We also provide provisions including clothing, toiletries, food and sleeping bags to our homeless clients. It can take time to find the right accommodation for some people so we try to provide things to keep them safe and warm in the meantime.



## Activities

We provide numerous activities and groups including: games group, arts and craft group; furniture restoration group; music group and gardening group. The groups give people something positive to do with their time and help build supportive networks and help increase people's resilience.



# Who do we help?

## Jim's story

Jim attended Pathways after being placed in Bed and Breakfast by NEDDC Homeless team. Jim had been sofa surfing but had experienced a mental breakdown and started using substances. Jim had put a claim in for benefits but had no bank account for money to be paid into. Jim had a referral into the recovery partnership but had not yet attended an appointment.

We prioritised getting Jim a bank account so he would have access to funds and supported him with foodbank and provisions until this was in place.

Jim was assessed by our housing team, and he felt at the moment supported accommodation might be better but was willing to look at private rented. We made a number of referrals, and the first offer came from Hope House, Jim had an assessment there but felt the support and community arrangement was too prescriptive and would not suit him.

Another housing provider that Jim was keen to go to refused his application and stated they wanted to see three months engagement with Derbyshire Recovery Partnership before accepting the referral. Jim was very frustrated with this as he was engaging well now with appointments and making progress but felt stable housing was something that would help him progress quicker. We sort evidence from Derbyshire Recovery Partnership to show his engagement and advocated on his behalf with the housing provider and they agreed to assess him. Jim was successful in his interview and was able to move in.

Jim was able to move from B and B straight into this accommodation and is now settled in this accommodation and continues to have ad hoc support from our nurses when he feels his mood dropping.

## Feedback from the people we work with

"Was getting nowhere by myself, once pathways were involved things happened really quickly."

"Until you've been in this position it's hard to put into words, as you have housed me and it's been a massive impact on my mental health."

"Pathways are a constant for me no matter how many mistakes I make they are there when I need them."

"I have not self harmed for the longest time since accessing Pathways, I feel like I can be myself for the first time."

"Understanding, non judgemental and treat people as individuals and with respect. Support is always given when needed."

# How can you help?

We want each partnership to be bespoke, so the details can be ironed out but below are suggestions for the type of thing you could offer.

## Sponsor an individual

We are often unable to offer people private accommodation as they require a bond and first months rent. We can apply for grants for some of this money but sometimes pay the additional amount ourselves. Sponsorship of an individual could be the difference between them being offered a home and not. An average bond is between £450 and £700.

## Sponsor an item

We often have to buy specific items for our clients such as sleeping bags, food or essential items to start a new tenancy. You could fundraise for a specific set of items such as sleeping bags, or items for an individual such as a home starter kit upon placement in accommodation. Below are some costs for our most common items

Item	Cost
Hot meal for 1 person at group	£1.50
Sleeping bag (summer)	£20
Sleeping bag (winter)	£30
Food voucher when starting in a new property	£50
Starter pack (kitchen items and bedding)	£200

## Events and Fundraising

We could run a variety of joint fundraising events such as dinners, music nights, afternoon tea, bake sale, sponsored walk/run/swim/bike etc.

## Volunteer days

A team of staff or clients could volunteer for us for the day. We often have projects around our building which need doing but we just don't have the man power to do them. For example, decorating the client rooms in our buildings, clearing the bushes at the back of office, sorting through bags of clothing donations or the million handyman jobs that always seem to need doing.

