SUPPORTED LODGINGS CONTRACT SUCCESS

We are excited to announce that Step by Step has won new Local Authority contracts to roll out our Supported Lodgings service in new areas.

Supported Lodgings will now have a presence in Swindon, Dorset and across the whole of Hampshire, allowing Step by Step to provide a home and support to more young people than ever before through this vital service.

“I am extremely proud of the Supported Lodgings team and the reputation they have for delivering a professional and highly effective service,” commented Ben Harman, Step by Step CEO. “It’s because of this reputation that we have the opportunity to expand into new areas and work in partnership with new Local Authorities.”

The ongoing success of Supported Lodgings is not only testament to the hard work and commitment of everyone at Step by Step, but the compassion of ordinary people giving their time and energy to help young people going through hard times.

With the expansion of our services into new areas, we are looking for people with a spare room and the desire to help a young person in need. Hosts are ordinary people who take on a young person as a lodger, not just providing accommodation, but enabling the young person to grow in confidence and learn life skills. In turn, we provide our Hosts with full training, ongoing support and a financial contribution.

We’re looking for Hosts in Swindon, Dorset and Hampshire. If you would like to make a difference to vulnerable young people, we would love to hear from you.

Contact our Supported Lodgings Team to find out more:
07809 340638 | supportedlodgings@stepbystep.org.uk
John* moved into our Dorset Foyer accommodation early last year following a family breakdown. He has high-functioning autism. His communication difficulties meant that he initially struggled to engage with staff at even the most basic level. An example was not evacuating the accommodation during a fire alarm test – his autism meant that he struggled to see why it would be important to practice such procedures. He also failed to attend any of his support sessions as he believed he would ask for help if he needed it.

The Dorset team worked closely with John to overcome these challenges. Gradually, they were able to agree ways in which he could engage with them that he felt comfortable with. These could be as simple as waving at staff through the office door each morning, or giving a thumbs up or thumbs down to indicate how he was feeling. He was also made to feel that he could speak to any member of the team at any time.

This tailored approach to engagement worked really well. Within a few months, John was attending weekly support sessions and looking to build relationships with his siblings. He was also able to manage his own money and diet for the first time.

“Seeing the progress John has made is such a rewarding outcome to the work and support we give,” says Mae Partridge, Regional Foyer Manager. “He was highly praised in his apprenticeship, leading to him gaining full time employment.”

We were delighted when John felt confident enough to progress into one of our ‘move on’ flats. These allow young people such as John to live more independently while still having access to Step by Step support. For John, this means he is one step closer to living the life that most young people take for granted.

*Name changed to protect privacy
We closed off our financial year in April and were able to reflect on our achievements for 2018/19. Here are just some of the highlights...

**2018/2019 ACHIEVEMENTS**

1,189 young people accessed our services

367 young people were accommodated in Foyers and Supported Lodgings

90% of those young people progressed positively

530 young people attended 1,788 counselling sessions

180 young people used our training services

145 young people received specialist support
FIGHTING THE INJUSTICE OF UNIVERSAL CREDIT

Step by Step are campaigning for a change in the way Universal Credit is implemented as the current system negatively affects young people living in supported lodgings accommodation.

The issues arising from Universal Credit are well documented. A reported published by a Commons Select Committee at the end of last year concluded that “the introduction of Universal Credit is causing unacceptable hardship and difficulties for many of the claimants it was designed to help.”¹ The Guardian reported that the delay in claimants receiving payment causes landlords to see them as a risk and therefore contributes to their homelessness.²

We are wielding our expertise and leadership in this field to push for a change in the law. Ben Harman, CEO, and Debbie Morton, Head of Young People’s Services, visited the Houses of Parliament to meet with MPs and present research findings and expert testimony. Justin Tomlinson, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, and Leo Doherty, MP for Aldershot, heard how the current implementation of Universal Credit could lead to greater numbers of young people experiencing homelessness.

The problem arises from the long wait time that supported lodgings hosts have to endure to receive benefits payments. This can mean it is not financially viable for hosts to offer accommodation to young people who might otherwise be homeless. We believe that supported lodgings should be exempt from Universal Credit so that hosts receive timely payment for the incredibly valuable work they do.

“Whilst Universal Credit is well intentioned, in practice it proves difficult for vulnerable people to access their awarded payments,” says Debbie Morton, Head of Young People’s Services at Step by Step. “Delays in payments have contributed to the growing crisis of homelessness, rent debt and financial difficulties. We are campaigning for reform alongside other leading charities.”

The visit to parliament was a fantastic opportunity to go direct to lawmakers and speak on behalf of young people about an issue that is affecting not only them, but many other individuals and families across the UK.

References

(1) Universal credit: delivery causing unacceptable hardship, Commons Select Committee, Oct 2018

When Karen*'s relationship with her partner broke down, she was unable to return home to her mum due to ongoing problems, and so found herself with nowhere to go. We initially gave her an emergency bed at our Krystal House foyer, before she moved into Stage One accommodation. This is accommodation for young people who require the most support.

Although clearly an intelligent girl, Karen lacked confidence and had little experience of living independently. She wanted to get into education but didn’t know how to go about doing so.

Our support staff helped her to increase her self-confidence, gain new skills and learn about positive relationships. She engaged with staff throughout the process and was able to progress to Stage Two accommodation where she could live with more independence.

Early this year, Karen discovered she was pregnant and decided to postpone her education. Louise Davies, Senior Floating Support Worker, assessed Karen and was confident she had learned the necessary skills for independent living. She helped her negotiate a two-bedroom property with the council, and although this was a lengthy process, Louise supported her every step of the way.

“It was a pleasure to watch her grow from an uncertain girl to a confident young woman,” Louise said. “She now has the skills to be successful and the passion to do well for her family.”

Karen now lives in her own flat with her baby due very soon. She is happy in her new home and hopeful about the future. She continues to stay in touch with Step by Step.

*Name changed to protect privacy
WHAT IS HIDDEN HOMELESSNESS?

A common misconception surrounding homelessness is that it’s all about rough sleeping. However, this is just the visible tip of the iceberg – it has been reported that in London alone, thirteen times more people are termed ‘hidden homeless’ than those sleeping on the street.¹

So what is hidden homelessness? A recent article by the BBC provides a good definition. “Hidden homeless are people without a place to call home, but who are hidden from official statistics and not receiving government support.” ² This includes people who are sofa-surfing, squatting and living in hostels, as well as other temporary forms of accommodation such as tents, night shelters and cars.

While current legislation might successfully support the most vulnerable people – such as those leaving care, those with children, or those fleeing domestic violence – many young people experiencing homelessness do not fall into any of these categories and are often ineligible for support.

This gap in support is often left to the not-for-profit sector to fill. As Ben Harman, CEO of Step by Step, explains: “Hidden homelessness is a growing issue that particularly affects young people. It does not have the visibility of street homelessness and therefore does not attract the publicity and support that a problem of such magnitude should be garnering. It is often left to the charity sector to address this shortfall.”

And hidden homelessness is indeed a huge issue. Research by the Guardian estimates that 1 in 5 young people can be classified as hidden homeless³, while an investigation in London reported that 225,000 young people have stayed in an unsafe place because they had nowhere to call home.¹

It is young people such as these, at risk of homelessness and without a safety net to catch them, that Step by Step so passionately strives to help.

References


(2) “Crisis warns of rise in UK’s ‘hidden’ homeless”, BBC news article, Dec 2017.

(3) “A fifth of young people are homeless - you just can’t see them”, news article, The Guardian, Sept 2017.
WE CAN HELP YOU FUNDRAISE!

We’ve made fundraising for Step by Step easier than ever. Our new Tool Kits are packed with tips and advice on organising your own fundraising event, whether it’s a bake sale, dress down day or a sleep out.

Check out some of the free fundraising Tool Kits we have available...

**Step Into Baking**

Host a bake sale at work or in your community centre, school or church. Our recipe cards will have you churning our baked deliciousness in no time.

**Step Into Quizzing**

Hosting a quiz night is easier than you think. Our Tool Kit contains tips on choosing the location, health & safety considerations, and how to raise money.

**Sleep Out**

You’ve probably heard about the Step by Step Sleep Out – our flagship fundraising event. Well why not organise your own Sleep Out? Whether you’re a school, community group or corporate team, it’s a great way to raise both funds and awareness.
Why do you volunteer for Step by Step?

My church has supported Step by Step for many years. When I visited the Aldershot Foyer for an introductory tour, I was so impressed by the commitment and energy of the staff that I wanted to volunteer straight away. Everyone was so enthusiastic about the work they did supporting young people that I knew it was a cause I could also be enthusiastic about.

How Do You Support Step by Step?

I’m a community fundraising volunteer, which means I work with schools, churches, youth groups and councils to promote Step by Step. I give presentations on the charity, run workshops and attend events. My role is to raise awareness of youth homelessness and the work the charity is doing to address it.

What do you enjoy most about volunteering?

I’m an experienced yachtsman so I love the opportunity to be able to take young people on sailing challenges. It’s a great way to learn new skills, but also to boost confidence and communication. You really have to work as a team, and that’s important for young people to learn whatever they go on to do.

How do you think Step by Step is making a difference?

There is a structured approach to helping young people at Step by Step that I find truly impressive. This approach establishes their self-confidence and brings out the best in their talents.

To find out about our volunteering opportunities, please contact recruitment@stepbystep.org.uk
GET INVOLVED!

Why not join one of our fantastic fundraising events? They’re a fun way to raise funds and awareness for Step by Step and the vulnerable young people we support.

10K WALK
Grab your walking boots and set off on a scenic trek around the beautiful Devil’s Punchbowl in Surrey. It’s a great way to get fit, enjoy some stunning views and raise money.

Details:
- Sunday 6th October, 11am
- £5 per ticket
- Under 16’s free
- Free T-shirt is you raise over £50

Sign up at:
www.stepbystep.org.uk/10k-walk

OR ORGANISE YOUR OWN EVENT....

STEP INTO PURPLE
Ditch the smart dress or uniform for the day and wear something purple. It could be as simple as a pair of socks, or as full-on as a onesie. It’s an event that’s easy to organise yourself and anyone can take part.

Details:
- Everyone pays a donation to wear something purple
- Get our free Tool Kit for tips and advice
- Contact our Fundraising Team for help:
  - fundraising@stepbystep.org.uk
  - 01252 346107
Rita and Tony have been Supported Lodgings Hosts for 20 years. The couple estimate they have helped over 60 young people in that time – an incredible testament to their passion and compassion. They are still Hosting today, despite their advancing years and Rita’s mobility issues, and are as committed to helping young people in need as ever.

When Rita and Tony’s adult children moved out of home, the couple found themselves with two spare bedrooms. They had seen news stories about homelessness and witnessed young people on the streets near their home town of Frimley, Surrey. Rita and Tony decided they wanted to do something to help and so contacted the charity. Now, some two decades later, the couple have a wealth of stories, memories and positive outcomes to reflect on. “We’ve had laughs. We’ve had tears”, Rita recalled, while Tony added: “It’s nice to see young people gain their independence and get back on their feet.”

The couple shared a story of taking two young people on a short holiday – with the authorisation of Step by Step. One of the girls had never been on holiday before and Tony said he could see a real change in her as a result of the trip as it represented a rare positive moment in her life.

Rita and Tony have acted as Hosts to a variety of young people from a myriad of backgrounds and with an array of needs. On average, a young person will live with them for between 1 and 1.5 years, but they have also offered short-term emergency accommodation as the need has arisen.

“Any problems, come and talk to us and we can sort it out” - Tony explained that communication was the key to being a successful Host, ensuring that a young person knows they can discuss any issues they are having and then taking the time to talk them through. It’s also important to help the young person work towards independent living, including doing their own cleaning, cooking and helping out around the house.

Most of the young people they supported still keep in touch with the couple, sharing news of independent lives, graduations, jobs and families of their own.

“Our door is always open,” Rita said of the young people who have moved on and the young people they still continue to support.
GIVE A REGULAR GIFT

If you’ve received a copy of this newsletter it’s because you have donated to us in the past, attended one of our events or shown an interest in what we do. For that we extend a massive thank you, not just from the team at Step by Step, but the hundreds of young people we support each year.

You can make even more of a difference by pledging a monthly donation and becoming a regular giver. The £5 you spend on a couple of coffees, or the £10 you spend on a bottle of wine, would make a genuine difference to a vulnerable young person going through hard times.

What we could do with your regular gift...

£7 would provide a young person with mental health support for one day
£12 would provide a young person with meals for a week
£30 allows us to accommodate a young person at risk of homelessness

Supporting young people with a regular gift is easier than you think...

Go Online
Visit www.stepbystep.org.uk/donate and choose an amount to give monthly

Get in Touch
Call our Fundraising Team on 01252 346107 or email fundraising@stepbystep.org.uk

If you’ve taken the time to read this page, a huge thank you.
If you’ve taken the time to pledge a regular gift, an even bigger thank you!

The Fundraising Team
YES, I WOULD LIKE TO HELP STEP BY STEP SUPPORT YOUNG PEOPLE

£7 Could provide a young person with the mental health support they need for one day.

£12 Could provide a young person with meals for a week.

£30 Enables us to Open a Door and accommodate a young person in need.

My Donation:
☐ £7 ☐ £12 ☐ £30 ☐ MY CHOICE £_______

My Contact Details:
Title: ___________________________
First Name: _______________________
Last Name: _______________________
Address: _________________________
_______________________________
_______________________________
Postcode: _______________________
Telephone: _______________________
Email: ___________________________

How I’d Like to Pay:
☐ I enclose a cheque or postal order payable to Step by Step Partnership Ltd

To donate online, go to:
www.stepbystep.org.uk

To donate by phone, to set up a regular donation, or to speak to a member of our Fundraising Team, please call 01252 346107.

Make Your Gift Worth Even More
Increase your gift by 25p for every £1 you have given.
☐ I’d like Step by Step to claim Gift Aid on donations made in the past four years, this donation, and any future donations. I understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax in the current tax year than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Date: ___________________________

Gift Aid will be used to help fund the whole of Step by Step’s work. You can cancel your declaration at any time. Please let us know if you change your name, address, or no longer pay sufficient Income / Capital Gains Tax.

Thank You for Your Donation!
Please return this form to: Fundraising Team, Step by Step, 36 Crimea Road, Aldershot, Hampshire, GU11 1UD

Data Protection:
We’d love to show you the impact of your support and share how the young people are getting on. Please let us know how you’d like to receive this information:
☐ I would like to hear from Step by Step

Please contact me by:
☐ Email ☐ Post ☐ Phone

You will typically receive communications from us twice a month.

If you would like to change the way you hear from us, please call 01252 346107 or email fundraising@stepbystep.org.uk

Thank you!