

# STEP BY STEP IMPACT REPORT 2024-25



[stepbystep.org.uk](http://stepbystep.org.uk)

Charity No 900308



# WELCOME

Step by Step now reaches over 1,500 young people each year, providing life-changing support and opportunities. This past year has been a landmark one for our organisation. From achieving Ofsted accreditation for our Supported Lodgings service to expanding our specialist support and wellbeing programmes, we have continued to strengthen the ways we help young people move forward with confidence.

Every step we take is about more than accommodation; it's about giving young people the stability, skills, and self-belief they need to shape their own futures.

I'm incredibly proud of what our teams, volunteers, hosts, foster carers, and supporters have achieved together. Their dedication ensures that young people not only find safety, but also the encouragement and opportunities they need to thrive.

This Impact Report celebrates what we have accomplished together in 2024–25 and sets the stage for even greater progress in the year ahead.

We remain committed to empowering young people to take that vital next step towards independence.



**Debbie Moreton**  
Step by Step CEO



**“THIS PAST YEAR HAS BEEN  
A LANDMARK ONE FOR OUR  
ORGANISATION.”**

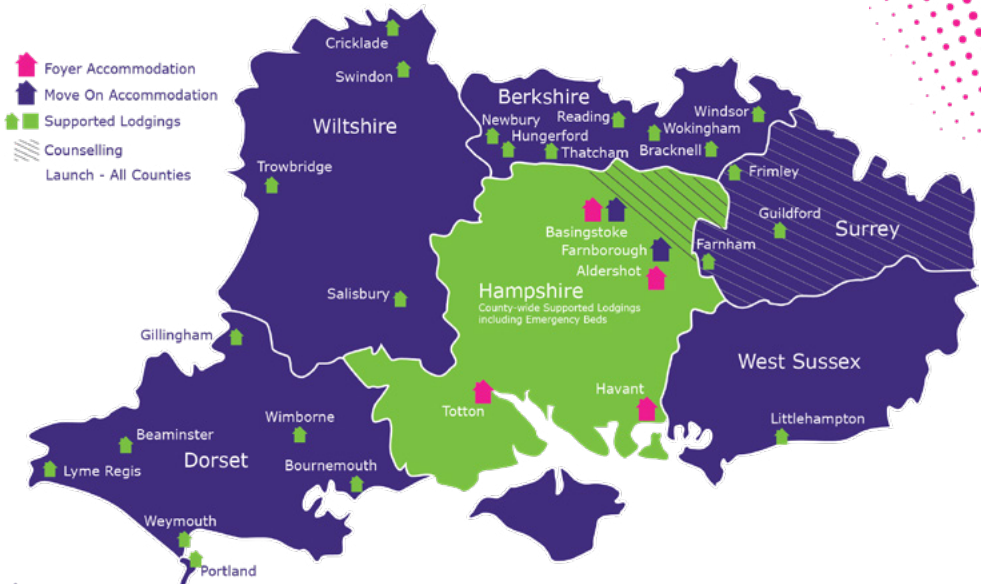
# ABOUT STEP BY STEP

Step by Step is taking a stand against youth homelessness and its causes. Across six counties in the South of England, our charity offers safe places to live and the opportunity to rebuild lives.

We know that young people need more than a roof over their head if they are to leave homelessness behind them. That is why we offer a range of services that include accommodation, counselling, wellbeing support, and advice and guidance. We help young people identify their potential, overcome their challenges and work towards a sustainable, independent future.

Our unique approach combines early intervention with longer term support, leading to measurable, lasting change for hundreds of young people each year. A Social Return on Investment report commissioned in 2024, showed that for every £1 invested in our services, we generate £6.80 of social impact.

At Step by Step, we see young people as true heroes, many of whom have already overcome considerable challenges to be here. Now these young people need someone to believe in them, to empower them to become the heroes of their own story.



# 2024-25 AT A GLANCE

## YOUNG PEOPLE

**1,481** young people supported

Average age of **16.5**

**70%** were teenagers

## ACCOMMODATION

**325** young people accommodated

**78%** progressed positively

**227** accommodated at any one time

# 2024-25 AT A GLANCE

## MENTAL HEALTH

**528** young people accessed counselling

**3,216** counselling sessions delivered

**101%** increase on previous year

## ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

**1,071** Launch sessions delivered

An increase of **15.9%**

**149** young people supported with the Opportunities Fund



Too many young people are facing a crisis they didn't create. The pressures of housing insecurity, economic instability, and unmet mental health needs are converging to push vulnerable young people to the edge.

## **RECORD-BREAKING HOMELESSNESS AMONG CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

A staggering 172,420 children in England are now living in temporary accommodation – the highest number since records began. For young people aged 16–25, the threat of homelessness is more widespread than ever; for those without family support or stable networks, the fallout is devastating.

## **THE HOUSING CRISIS IS BLOCKING PROGRESS**

Soaring rents, rising bills, and stagnant wages have made independence feel out of reach. Many young people are ready to stand on their own two feet – but the system won't let them. Local Housing Allowance rarely covers even the cheapest accommodation. For care leavers and low-income workers, it creates a trap: move forward and lose your safety net.

## **CARE LEAVERS AND SEPARATED CHILDREN ARE SLIPPING THROUGH THE CRACKS**

One in four care leavers become homeless within two years of leaving care. These young people are expected to navigate adulthood alone, often

without the emotional or financial support that most of us take for granted. For separated children, the risks are even higher. Isolated, traumatised, and navigating a complex legal system, many find themselves at real danger of exploitation or rough sleeping.

## **WORK DOESN'T ALWAYS OFFER ESCAPE**

Youth unemployment remains significantly higher than the national average. But even young people who find work are not guaranteed stability. Many lose access to housing support once they begin earning, pricing them out of safe, stable housing and into precarious situations.

## **A GROWING MENTAL HEALTH EMERGENCY**

Young people are bearing the psychological weight of instability. One in six now experiences anxiety or depression – a sharp rise from one in nine before the pandemic. The uncertainty of homelessness only deepens the crisis, making recovery even harder without access to consistent, trauma-informed support.

At Step by Step, we believe that young people are not victims – they are heroes in the making. But every hero needs someone who believes in them. Together, we can take a stand against youth homelessness and build a future where no young person is left behind.



## JENNY - EXTENDED SUPPORTED LODGINGS

Jenny became homeless at just 17. Conflict at home had left her feeling unsafe to stay. Step by Step gave Jenny a place in Supported Lodgings, living with a host family who would provide not only a safe place to live, but the nurturing and mentorship she needed to move forward with her life.

Most placements are not funded after 18, meaning Jenny would have to soon move out. However, we were able to offer her an Extended Supported Lodgings placement, funded by supporters, which allowed her to stay until she was ready to move on.

OAKLEY...

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# SUPPORTED LODGINGS

Step by Step operates the UK's leading Supported Lodgings service, both in terms of size and its authority in the sector. We became the first service of this kind to be Ofsted registered and received the top grade.

## WHAT IS SUPPORTED LODGINGS?

- Young people live with host individuals or families in their home
- Hosts act as mentors for young people and teach them life skills
- Hosts are fully vetted, trained and supported
- A dedicated Support Worker oversees each placement
- The largest of our accommodation models and is Ofsted registered
- Operates across six counties: Hampshire, Surrey, Berkshire, Dorset, Wiltshire and West Sussex
- Step by Step is awarded contracts from local authorities to run the service
- Young people up to the age of 18 receive funded support
- If the young person will benefit from staying on after 18, their placement can be extended with fundraised income

## OUR IMPACT IN 2024-25

Supported Lodgings accommodated **229 young people** throughout the year, with up to **188** in placement at any one time.

The average age of these young people was **17.68 years old**, with **59%** identifying as male.

**76%** of young people in Supported Lodgings demonstrated positive progression towards their goals.

**70%** were in education, employment or training.

**Nine** young people passed A-levels or equivalent qualifications, and **six** young people left Supported Lodgings for University.

We expanded into a new area - Wokingham - to be able to offer **12 new placements** for young people.

We **won Local Authority contracts** to continue the service in Hampshire and West Berkshire.



## CALLUM - ALDERSHOT FOYER

Callum was forced to leave the family home when his relationship with his stepfather broke down. With nowhere else to turn, he found himself homeless.

Step by Step was able to offer Callum a place in our Aldershot accommodation. His Support Worker helped him to come up with a plan, including seeking help for his anxiety and night terrors.

Callum engaged with the support and demonstrated positive progress. Nine months later, he moved into private rental accommodation, able to enjoy the independence that seemed so far out of reach when he first came to Step by Step.

# SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION

Our Supported Accommodation service expanded with the addition of our first Move On property – providing young people with a vital stepping stone to independent living. The young people’s resilience and willingness to engage was truly inspiring, resulting in an exceptional progression rate.

## WHAT IS SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION?

- This is comprised of Foyer and Move On accommodation.
- In Foyers, young people live with their peers in a staffed Step by Step building. In Aldershot, these are split into SAB or SIF
- Supported Accommodation Beds (SAB): individual bedrooms with shared communal facilities, and support available 24/7
- Supported Independence Flats (SIF): flats for four young people to live more independently, akin to living in a shared house
- Each young person is assigned a Support Worker
- Support sessions focus on identifying a young person’s aspirations and working towards their goals
- Step by Step has Foyers in Aldershot, Basingstoke, Havant and Totton
- Move On accommodation sees young people living independently in a house in the community, with Step by Step Support Workers on-hand should they need them
- Supported accommodation is funded by a mix of local authority and voluntary income

## OUR IMPACT IN 2024-25

**96 young people** were accommodated in our Foyers, up from **83** young people the previous year.

The average age of these young people was **18.28 years old**, with **52%** identifying as male.

**15 young people** were in high-intensity support placements. This is a **50% increase** on 2023-24 and demonstrates the increased need among young people.

**79%** of young people demonstrated positive progression, up from **62%** the previous year. This is a significant achievement considering the increased level of need.

**Three** more placements were created with the opening of our Farnborough Move On accommodation, with support from a generous private funder.

We housed and supported **325 young people** across all our accommodation services, many of whom would have been homeless without our help.



Our new Independent Fostering Agency had its first full year of operation, passing Ofsted registration and already changing young lives. Step by Step Fostering furthers our mission to support young people and meet ever-increasing need.

## ABOUT STEP BY STEP FOSTERING

- A unique model for a fostering agency
- Excess funds go back to support other Step by Step services in order to help even more young people
- Fostering agencies match children and young people with foster carers
- Step by Step Fostering focuses on older children, but can match any age to keep siblings together
- Our foster carers are given industry-leading training and ongoing support
- Step by Step Fostering operates across Hampshire, Surrey, Wiltshire, Dorset, Berkshire and West Sussex – the same areas as the wider Step by Step charity
- We accept applications from new foster carers and those wishing to transfer from another agency
- Ofsted registered

## OUR IMPACT IN 2024-25

After 12 months of operation, Step by Step Fostering expanded to **six placements**.

The first **six young people** are already in placement and enjoying safe, loving homes.

Feedback from our foster carers and the young people they support has been positive and heartwarming.

This is just the start of Step by Step's fostering journey, with our plans to expand further and give more children and young people a loving place to call home.

**"IF I WERE TO USE ONE WORD TO DESCRIBE STEP BY STEP FOSTERING, IT WOULD BE EMPOWERING. OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH OUR SUPERVISING SOCIAL WORKER IS GREAT AND SHE SHARES LOADS OF INFORMATION WITH US THAT HELPS US ALONG OUR JOURNEY."**

**- HANNAH, FOSTER CARER WITH STEP BY STEP**



Last financial year was a record-breaking 12 months for our Counselling service. Not only did we dramatically increase the number of counselling sessions delivered to young people, we achieved our best-ever average waiting times, far below national averages.

## ABOUT COUNSELLING AT STEP BY STEP

- Available in Surrey, for young people aged 11-25, and in North Hampshire for young people aged 11-18
- An integral part of our early-intervention approach to tackling issues in young people
- Typical issues include depression, anxiety, school pressures, bullying and low self-esteem
- Counselling is free of charge and confidential
- Courses of counselling are typically five to eight 50-minute sessions
- Sessions can be in-person at various locations, or remote via phone or video call – whatever best suits the young person
- We use talking therapy that allows young people to freely share their concerns and explore practical tools to help
- Operates in partnership with the NHS Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)
- Young people can be referred by GPs or other professionals, or can self-refer via our website

## OUR IMPACT IN 2024-25

**528 young people** were supported by our counselling service, **20** more than the previous year.

We delivered an incredible **3,216 sessions**, a year-on-year increase of **19%**. This equated to an average of six sessions per young person.

Our average waiting time fell to just **26 days**. This is down from **55 days** in 2023-24, and considerably below that of comparable providers.

The average age of young people attending counselling was just **14.19 years old**, with nearly **two-thirds** identifying as female.

In an anonymous survey, **95%** of young people agreed or strongly agreed that their counselling sessions had met their needs.

**"I FELT REALLY SUPPORTED. YOU HELPED MY PROBLEMS AND YOU ENCOURAGED ME TO PROBLEM SOLVE ON MY OWN IN THE FUTURE."**

**- YOUNG PERSON SUPPORTED BY COUNSELLING**



## BRADLEY - OPPORTUNITIES FUND

Bradley was made homeless at just 16 years old. Fortunately, Step by Step was able to offer him a place in Supported Lodgings, living with a host family who would provide the safety and guidance he needed.

Bradley was also supported by our Opportunities Fund. When it came to move on to private rental, the Fund was used to pay the £30 membership fee for a property website. While this is a small amount of money for most people, it was unaffordable for Bradley and the funding made all the difference.

*"The funding helped me look for rooms more efficiently as more came up and I had the option before some others."*

Bradley is now living independently and doing well.



# LAUNCH: GUIDANCE AND WELLBEING

Our advice, guidance and wellbeing service is an integral part of our early intervention approach in targeting the risk factors for youth homelessness. Any young person in our catchment area can self-refer for support on a wide range of issues.

## WHAT IS LAUNCH?

- Launch is an open-access advice, guidance and wellbeing service, free of charge for young people aged 11-25
- Sessions can be delivered in-person, by phone, or online
- Young people are assigned a specialist Support Worker to help with housing issues, general wellbeing, and drugs and alcohol recovery
- Launch also offers support with getting into work or education, claiming benefits, sexual health, and food parcels
- It can also refer young people facing homelessness to Step by Step accommodation services
- Launch Support Workers provide one-to-one support that includes guidance, signposting and practical support
- Launch is predominately funded by fundraised income

## OUR IMPACT IN 2024-25

We delivered **1,071** Launch sessions to **725 young people**. This is a **16%** increase in sessions on the previous year.

**156** of those young people accessed Launch for support with emotional wellbeing.

**53%** of young people supported by Launch were male, with an average age of **20.34 years old**.

**315** StepChat sessions offered young people immediate access to support or information on how to get help

The Opportunities Fund was used to support **149 young people**, paying for items that help overcome barriers to progression.

Step by Step delivered **2,080** peer education sessions, presenting in schools and community spaces to help make young people aware of our work and the help available to them.



# WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE ARE SAYING

"Moving in with my Supported Lodgings Host and getting away from my previous living situation has helped me so much. Actually having people who care about me has helped with my motivation. I think I lost myself for a long time."

## - YOUNG PERSON LIVING IN SUPPORTED LODGINGS

"Thank you so much for all the support you've given me. I wouldn't be who I am if it wasn't for you. Step by Step has been a really good place for me."

## - YOUNG PERSON IN FOYER ACCOMMODATION

"I wanted to say a massive thank you for the funding and delivery of my new bike. It has had a huge impact on my mental wellbeing giving me an option to use it when I'm stressed as a method of destressing, providing another form of transport and allowing me to be involved in bike rides with friends. It has had a brilliant impact and I am hugely thankful."

## - YOUNG PERSON SUPPORTED BY THE OPPORTUNITIES FUND

"I loved that I felt that I could talk to [the counsellor] about anything, especially at the time when I felt I had no one to talk to."

## - YOUNG PERSON ATTENDING COUNSELLING

"I was very nervous to meet my host for the first time, but we were paired so well that it felt like I'd known her for years. I knew I was going to be well taken care of."

## YOUNG PERSON LIVING IN SUPPORTED LODGINGS



# MOVING TOWARDS INDEPENDENCE

Moving Towards Independence was a collaborative study between Step by Step and the Centre for Homelessness Research and Policy, based at the University of Southampton. It gave young people a unique opportunity to share their experiences of leaving supported accommodation, with the aim of creating policy recommendations shaped by young people themselves.

These recommendations were:

**UNIVERSAL CREDIT PARITY:** young people should receive the same level of Universal Credit as their older peers.

**HOUSING PRIORITY:** care leavers should be afforded priority for social housing as they are less likely to have a support network to fall back on.

**EMOTIONAL AND PRACTICAL SUPPORT:** this additional support would recognise the challenges care leavers have overcome and continue to face.

**TIMELY MOVING ON INFORMATION:** young people should be afforded information and guidance at least six months before they are due to move on.

The findings of the study and its recommendations were then presented to a panel of MPs at the Houses of Parliament, organised by Aldershot MP Alex Baker. Stevie, a young person supported by Step by Step, spoke to the panel, sharing her own inspiring story while eloquently representing the views and experiences of the young people who contributed to the unique research project.

Alex Baker MP commented: "In this research, the young people themselves told us what would help them transition to the next stages of their lives. It is vitally important that we listen, since the statistics show that people leaving care are more likely to experience joblessness, suffer from poorer health, have fewer qualifications, and are more likely to end up in trouble with the police.

"The work of local charity Step by Step shows that investing in support for young care leavers early on can massively improve their lives and reduce the longer-term costs to the state."



# WHAT'S NEXT?

## EMBEDDING A TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH

We are working to embed a trauma-informed approach across all Step by Step services. This means recognising the deep and lasting impact of trauma in young people's lives and responding with compassion, consistency and care.

Our teams are undergoing enhanced training to build on their expertise, ensuring we work with young people in ways that reduce retraumatisation and build trust. This approach isn't just good practice, it's how we help young people feel truly seen, respected and understood.

## EXPANDING MOVE ON ACCOMMODATION

Young people thrive when they have a safe, stable place to live - but also the freedom to take their next steps. That's why we are looking to expand our Move On accommodation and open new sites across the region.

These homes offer young people the opportunity to live more independently in the community, while still being supported by Step by Step staff when they need it. This provides a vital bridge between supported accommodation and full independence.

## PUSHING FOR CHANGE

We know that real, lasting change for young people can't happen through support services alone. It also takes policy change, system reform and public will. That's why we are stepping up our campaigning efforts, championing the voices and needs of the young people we serve.

We'll be engaging with decision-makers, driving the agenda and advocating for the changes that have real impact for young people.

Young people are the heroes of their own stories - and we'll be right there beside them.

# FUNDRAISING HIGHLIGHTS

## OPEN DOORS 2024

Our Christmas appeal raised a fantastic £31,900, thanks to the kindness of individuals, community groups and corporate partners. This was invaluable income to support services beyond the festive season.



## IVY'S 100 MILE WALK

Pocket-sized fundraiser Ivy wanted to help other young people less fortunate than her – and she did so by walking an incredible 100 miles, an amazing feat at just 8 years old!



## SLEEP OUT 2024

Our flagship fundraising event was back for one of its biggest years ever. Over 100 Sleepers braved a freezing October night at Farnborough Business Park to raise an impressive £19,000.





# FUNDRAISING HIGHLIGHTS



## GLEESON LAND PARTNERSHIP

2024-25 saw an inspiring partnership with Gleeson Land. The company supported us throughout the year with various fundraising activities, raising over £20,000 to help combat youth homelessness.



## BRIGHTER FUTURES 2024

This appeal was a chance to shout about our services that support young people beyond accommodation, raising over £9,000 to fund wellbeing support, advice and guidance, and the Opportunities Fund.



## GOLF TEAM CHALLENGE

We took to the beautiful Camberley Heath golf course for a day of fairway fundraising. Organised by SBS volunteer Gerd, it brought in just under £8,000 to support our life-changing services.

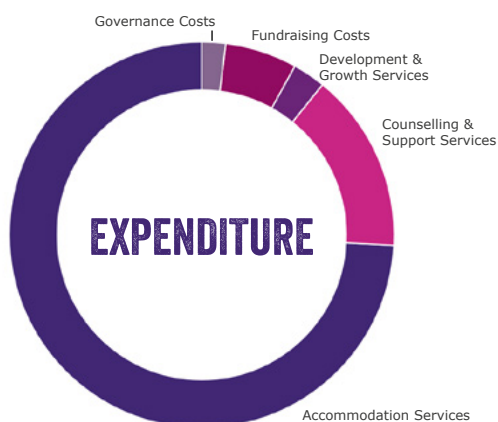
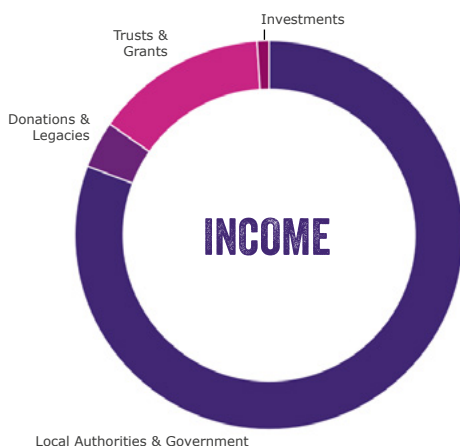


## INCOME

	2024-25	2023-24
Local Authorities & Government	£3,491,164	£3,349,457
Fundraising - Donations & Legacies	£168,929	£182,225
Fundraising - Trusts & Grants	£618,976	£672,335
Investments	£42,947	£29,389
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£4,322,016</b>	<b>£4,233,406</b>

## EXPENDITURE

	2024-25	2023-24
Accommodation Services	£3,140,834	£2,912,444
Counselling & Support Services	£638,268	£601,099
Development & Growth Services	£116,590	£138,130
Fundraising Costs	£255,995	£257,427
Governance Costs	£84,640	£55,627
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£4,236,327</b>	<b>£3,964,727</b>



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