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OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

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01 INTRODUCTION

There has been unprecedented change, but certain truths remain in the capital: far too many young people find themselves unhoused, unsupported and unsafe. The pandemic and cost of living crisis have exacerbated existing inequities and cracks in the system that is meant to protect our most at-risk community members. As we plan for how society can navigate these challenges, it is critical that we ensure young people, especially those experiencing homelessness and who have been systemically denied a voice, are front and centre of planning and investment.

The severity of the situation demands a bolder and bigger response than we might previously have thought, and this response requires us to grow – in every sense of the word. We've grown our team and our services and have put a lot of thought into laying out exactly how we want to change the sector and society for the benefit of every young person. Our Theory of Change is the vehicle for this task, demonstrating how our young people, team and work all work towards a common goal; a future where:

ALL YOUNG PEOPLE IN LONDON HAVE THE CHANCE TO REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL.



02 OUR LONG-TERM OUTCOMES

We work with young people, aged 16-24, who are unsafe or experiencing homelessness in London. We want the same opportunities for all young people in London, regardless of their background, characteristics, or circumstances, so they can reach their full potential and live the lives they want. This is a very long-term impact – it may take decades to achieve and can only be done in partnership with other people and organisations.

To get there we'll work to ensure young Londoners are:

1. **Safe:** young people will be safer from emotional and physical harm. We also aim to keep young people safer from the harms caused to them by systemic barriers and inequities.
2. **Healthy:** young people will have improved mental and physical health.
3. **Equipped:** young people will have learned the emotional, financial and practical life skills necessary to succeed.
4. **Housed:** young people will find and sustain long-term, safe, youth-appropriate housing they can call home.
5. **Have better services:** better resourced, youth-appropriate and timely services will be available to all young people in London who are unsafe or experiencing homelessness.

We think these changes can be driven in two main ways. This is reflected in our map as two interconnected paths:

1. **Changes for young people we support** through our own services; and
2. **Systems change for the young people we may never meet**, through policy work, partnerships and campaigning.

03 CHANGES FOR THE YOUNG PEOPLE WE SUPPORT

Our direct work with young people

We offer wraparound, holistic support, including housing, advice and healthcare services for young people. We support young people through outreach in the community and in prison, in our accommodation projects across London or in our Camden day centre.

We're proud of our approach to this work, which is unique, effective and led by clear values. We:

1. create a sense of **warm, safe welcome** in our day centre and wherever we meet young people
2. see young people's **strengths**, as well as their circumstances
3. can work with young people for as **long as they need** our support
4. support young people to make their own, **informed choices**
5. recognise that **past experiences** may affect young people in different ways and we support them where they are at
6. are **inclusive** and welcome all young people, regardless of background
7. **communicate with young people clearly and honestly** and encourage them to do the same with us
8. are **responsive**, creative and flexible.

Changes for these young people

Firstly, we help young people **deal with their immediate issues**: no one can focus on their career goals or studies if they're not sure where they're sleeping that night or when their next meal will be. We work on helping them **feel safe**; this could be by moving them to a different area, placing them in emergency accommodation or giving them essential items such as food. By receiving this support in a timely and non-judgemental manner, they start to **trust us**, something they may have never done with another service. This helps them start to **learn more about their rights and options**, grow **more confident**, and gain **hope for the future**. As a result

of these important earlier changes young people can start making **practical changes**, such as developing **independent living skills** at our workshops, **managing their mental health** with our counsellors' help, **taking up new opportunities** via our Jobs, Education and Training team and **pursuing creative passions**, for example by attending our music studio. We can meet and support them in crisis, but our help goes well beyond that, towards the future we know they deserve.

Life is never linear, so we know not all young people will experience all these changes or do so in this order. However, based on over 50 years' experience in working with and learning from young people, this is a good description of change as it happens for many.

04 CHANGING THE SYSTEM FOR THE YOUNG PEOPLE WE MAY NEVER MEET

It's not enough to just focus on direct outcomes for the young people we work with; we want better services for all young people, even those we'll never meet. Through campaigning, policy and partnership work, we say what others won't and do what others don't to ensure that no young person misses out.

We want:

- better resourced, evidence-based, youth-appropriate and timely services available for young people who are unsafe or unhoused
- fewer young people to reach crisis point because they get services earlier
- fewer young people to need services in the first place.

We are uniquely placed through our work on the ground to gather insights on young people's experiences. We also aim for young people to directly share their voices to affect system change.

FOR AS LONG AS YOUNG PEOPLE FIND THEMSELVES HOMELESS AND UNSAFE IN LONDON, WE WILL BE ON A MISSION TO GIVE THEIR POTENTIAL A HOME.

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