

N

H

NEW HORIZON YOUTH CENTRE



***Tender brief for the external
evaluation of the Health team's
service delivery with young people
experiencing homelessness***

Y

NEW
HORIZON
YOUTH
CENTRE

C

1. About New Horizon Youth Centre

New Horizon works with young people, aged 16-24, who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of serious violence in London.

Our [Theory of Change](#) outlines how we work to ensure young Londoners are:

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

2. About our Health team

2.1. PURPOSE

Young people experiencing homelessness are often in crisis – the uncertainty and instability of not having a safe place to stay, along with challenges in other practical areas of their lives are major stressors which contribute to feelings of depression, anxiety and stress, poor physical health, and unhealthy lifestyles. We have observed that people experiencing homelessness often experience chronic mental and physical health problems which go untreated, either because they don't seek treatment or because they are excluded from accessing mainstream services.

NHS mental health services are severely oversubscribed, with complex assessment processes and engagement 'rules' which mean they are either impossible for young people with complex needs to access, or unlikely to provide the right type of support. These are just some of the barriers we see young people facing.

Young people tell us that having someone they can trust, who they feel genuinely cares about them and will not let them down, is the most important factor in helping them to make positive changes to their lives. Our model is centred on building trusting relationships between health workers and young people, so they feel safe and supported to achieve their goals. Alongside this we help them to navigate complex systems, understand their healthcare rights, and have their voices heard.

2.2. STAFF AND SERVICE DELIVERY

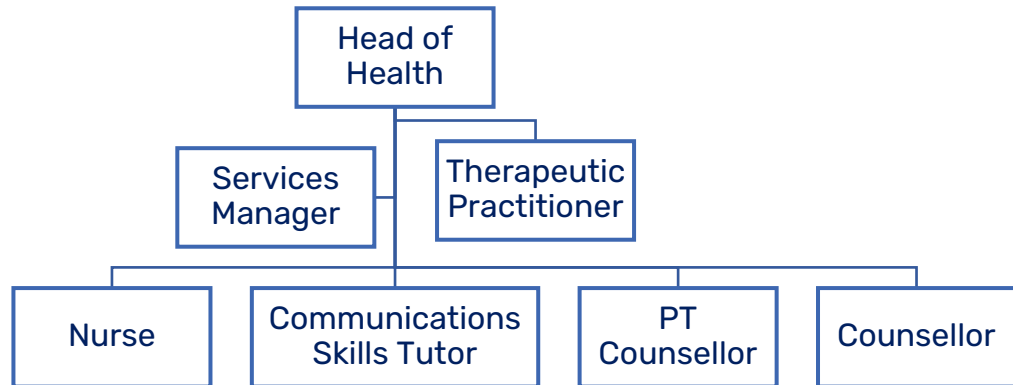


Figure 1: Structure of Health team

Our health team came about in response to this significant area of need, which has been worsened by both the pandemic and cost of living crisis. Evidence shows that people experiencing homelessness often experience chronic mental and physical health problems which go untreated either because they don't seek treatment or because they are excluded from accessing mainstream services. NHS mental health services for young people are severely oversubscribed, with long waiting lists, complex assessment processes and engagement 'rules' which mean that they are either impossible for young people with complex needs to access, or unlikely to provide the type of support a young person will successfully engage with.

New Horizon's Health team was established in Spring 2022 with the specific target of providing trauma informed, short to long-term healthcare services to young people experiencing homelessness. The team includes a **clinical lead (Head of Health)**, who drives a trauma-informed approach across all New Horizon services, so that projects and programmes are designed to address the psychological and emotional needs of young people experiencing homelessness. This also includes the development of staff training, wellbeing, and reflective spaces.

Currently, young people have access to a part-time **counsellor** through our drop-in day centre and remotely, as well as a **nurse practitioner** who provides 'health MOTs' measuring key health statistics, advice around sexual and mental health, and help for young people to register and access other healthcare providers. We also offer support through our **communications skills tutor** around communication, speech, and language to young people with communication difficulties, neurodiversity and low levels of literacy; this helps them understand and prepare for housing and benefits claims and equips them with skills to sustain positive outcomes including long-term accommodation, education or employment.

Most recently a **services manager** was recruited, to effectively coordinate and build partnerships with various health related services. They also hold a small caseload of young people with complex health needs, providing 1:1 support and advocacy work. This year we aim to recruit a **therapeutic practitioner** through close collaboration with the Camden & Islington Young People Service, to bridge the gap between voluntary and statutory services and offer young people facing barriers a fast-tracked pathway to more immediate support.

2.3. SERVICE OUTCOMES

In 2023-24 alone, **69 young people accessed in-house counselling and 241 young people were consulted by the nurse.**

We aim for young people to experience:

- Improved access to health services across non-statutory and statutory providers, including mental health support
- Increased number of external referrals to health services
- Improved knowledge of different pathways to access healthcare and increased confidence in navigating the complexity of the healthcare system
- Improved understanding of their own rights and entitlement to support, and improved ability to self-advocate for access to support
- Building of resilience and tools to positively manage their health
- Better understanding of their own emotions; improved emotional regulation; and increased self-esteem/self-confidence
- As per our organisational Theory of Change, in the long-term we expect young people to experience improved mental health and physical health, as well as improved management of health outcomes.

Staff providing support may in turn experience:

- Improved understanding of the impact of trauma on young people
- Improved wellbeing and self-care through reflective practice
- Improved management of positive endings with young people in the provision of health related support

3. Outline of the proposed evaluation

We would like the evaluation to evidence the Health team's unique approach to supporting young people; which aspects of the team's approach and their services are effective in making a difference to young people; and the extent to which the Health team achieves their intended outcomes.

The evaluation should consider the following questions:

Defining the Health team's offer

- What is the Health team's approach and which aspects/mechanisms make it unique from other (non-statutory and statutory) health services?
- What is the impact of the Health team's structure, considering both specific roles and team members' work in isolation, as well as how team members may work together/provide cross-team support?
- How has the project changed the way staff work with, and advocate on behalf of, young people?
- What is the impact of the Health team's partnerships and networks with other statutory and non-statutory agencies?
- To what extent does the Health team's offer effectively 'bridge the gap' between services for young people?
- To what extent does the Health team's offer address issues around equity, diversity and inclusion?

Young people's experiences and outcomes

- What barriers have young people faced in trying to access the healthcare system; and how does the Health team work to alleviate or circumvent these barriers?
- What are young people's views of the services offered? What have they found to be the most effective elements of the Health team's offer in supporting them, and why?
- How do young people perceive their own outcomes as a result of support?
- How does impact differ across the reach and depth of support, e.g. comparing young people with different additional needs and protected characteristics; comparing brief one-off interventions with long-term support?

As we are in the process of recruiting a clinical practitioner to the Health team and will be doing so as the evaluation runs, we would like the evaluation to also consider the potential impact of this new role and any emerging findings around approach, service delivery and outcomes.

4. Methodology

The appointed individual(s) or organisation will be expected to evaluate service delivery and outcomes between the period of June 2023 (from when the Health Services Manager was recruited to post) to March 2025.

We are open to exploring the best approach with the appointed individual(s) or organisation, but we would ask to include the following at minimum:

- **A mix of qualitative and quantitative methods**, including interviews with staff and young people that have been supported by the Health team.
- **A co-production approach**. In previous New Horizon evaluations young people have been involved in how to evaluate the project, including writing interview questions. We would expect a commitment to continuing a

participatory approach and involving young people and past service users in the design and delivery of the evaluation.

- **Creative methods and/or outputs.** We are eager for the evaluation to include creative methods and/or outputs such as infographics and videos, which are engaging to our service users.

The individual(s) or organisation commissioned to undertake this evaluation will ideally have:

- Experience working with vulnerable young people aged 16-24, including those with additional support needs and those experiencing homelessness
- Knowledge of the homelessness sector, particularly youth homelessness
- A can-do, flexible approach to evaluation and consideration of barriers to engaging with evaluation processes, among young people and staff

Desirable, but not essential:

- A strong background and extensive experience working within the health sector; they will be able to bring specialist knowledge and consideration of issues faced by people navigating the complexity of the health system

5. Deliverables and timescales

Deliverables	Dates
Monthly progress meetings	TBC in consultation with Head of Health Services and Impact and Learning Manager
Report launch	31 st March 2025
Learning/dissemination event	Spring 2025

We anticipate the work will begin in July 2024 and run until March 2025.

The final report and dissemination event should be of the standard that enables us to share the learning for best practice purposes.

In addition, the commissioned evaluator(s) would be expected to:

- Attend meetings to finalise the evaluation plan, methodology, and agree on roles and responsibilities
- Attend meetings to update on progress and review draft deliverables

In turn, we would provide:

- Access to raw individual datasets – we record demographic and background data, casework notes, and 3 month surveys asking young people to rate the level of their mental health, physical health, self-esteem and confidence, life skills, and perception of safety

- Background documents including access to previous external evaluations
- Regular updates on project management
- Access to Health team workers

6. Budget

The budget for this work is £20,000 inclusive of VAT and expenses.

7. Tender process

7.1. Key dates

- Deadline for bids: 1st July 2024
- Interview of shortlisted applicants: 8th July 2024
- Award of contract: 10th July 2024
- Kick off meeting: w/c 15th July 2024

7.2. Tender contents

Bids should include the following:

- Covering letter
- Proposed methodology to address the evaluation questions described above, ideally providing details of:
 - how you envisage the design of evaluation activities
 - consideration of resource and capacity of Health team workers
 - what data you will be collecting and how you will do this
 - how the evaluation will address matters of diversity, equity and anti-racism, and
 - how the evaluation will meet ethical standards
- Proposed outputs, including reports
- Proposed project management plan
- Schedule of costs
- Names and addresses of two referees
- Short CVs of each individual carrying out the evaluation
- Examples of similar evaluations you have undertaken

We intend to interview shortlisted applicants. The interview panel will be formed of Charly Dale, Head of Health, Linda Hien, Impact and Learning Manager, and Polly Stephens, Head of Policy, Impact and Partnerships.

7.3. Submission

Bids should be emailed to linda.hien@nhyouthcentre.org.uk with the subject heading 'Health External Evaluation' by **1st July 2024, 5pm.**

Queries related to the tender should be sent to Charly Dale, Head of Health (charly.dale@nhyouthcentre.org.uk).