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STORMS & SUNFLOWERS

Impact Report 2024-25



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**NEW
HORIZON
YOUTH
CENTRE**

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Note from the Chair of the Board

There is a display in the centre that has caught my attention every time I have visited this last year.

Right besides our ever-in-demand Advice Room is a collection of drawing and photos of sunflowers, created – and in the case of the real ones, grown – within the sanctuary of our Chalton Street base.

But what has always captured my attention is the large word – ‘latutu’ – prominently in the centre of the yellow plants. Latutu, it says, is a Sudanese word with two meanings and it’s a duality that perfectly captures our year. Because our year has been both storms and sunshine, darkness and light, challenges of course, but also opportunity.

The high demand from young people facing homelessness has been a consistent backdrop to our year again, as the numbers of young rough sleepers has again seen worrying increases. Compounding and overlapping crises resulting from housing, the cost of living and under-resourced public services have now become normalised but their effects on the young people we support are anything but normal.

It is why I am proud of the continued, consistent efforts of the team to raise youth homelessness up the policy agenda and to ensure our new government has a dedicated chapter – and ring-fenced set of commitments – in their forthcoming national strategy to end homelessness.

And it is also why I so greatly admire the team’s tenacity as they continue their work in such circumstances. Our team’s ability to house young

people might be getting harder because of the failing systems around us but their resolve has never faltered. The trustees and I cannot thank them enough.

But despite the challenges, New Horizon has always been a beacon of hope. Like the flowers that adorn the walls of our display, our work follows the sun and seeks out hope when there only appears to be dismay. It is why one of our community managed to jump from the streets to a plane to Korea to captain Team England in the Homeless World Cup. It is why another went from completing their A Levels in an emergency shelter, to donning a gown as a new undergraduate at the University of Cambridge.

Their successes, and the potential of every young person through our door, is the daily inspiration we need to fuel our work but none of it would also be possible without the generosity and encouragement of our supporters and the skill, passion and tenacity of our staff team. One day will walk out of the storm together and be proud of what we have achieved.

Thank you for the contribution you have made to enable our vital work.

Matthew

Matthew Reed

Chair of the Board of Trustees



About New Horizon Youth Centre

Every year, thousands of young people across the capital become homeless through no fault of their own. That's why New Horizon Youth Centre exists.

We are a vital support network for 16 to 24 year olds with nowhere else to go. Through the services we provide at our day centre and in the community across London, our multidisciplinary team of 70+ staff support thousands of young people experiencing homelessness in London to find safety, improve their wellbeing, develop skills for life and ultimately find somewhere that they can call home.

For as long as young people are homeless and unsafe in London, we will be on a mission to give their potential a home.

We deliver this mission through the following strategic objectives:

- Delivering high quality, trauma-informed services for any young person that needs our support **(Services)**.
- Working with and through others to optimise our offer and maximise our impact **(Partnerships)**.
- Saying and doing what others won't to ensure that no young person misses out, even the young people we will never meet **(Campaigns)**.

We deliver these by:

- Sustaining a well-run organisation that invests in staff and celebrates the diversity that makes us a success **(Well-run organisation)**

And our work is guided by three values:

1. We **champion** young people
2. We **collaborate** for impact
3. We are **determined** to find a way

New Horizon was founded in 1967 to address the needs of young people who were involved in drug misuse in the West End of London. 57 years later we are still working with young people in London, now with a much wider scope. During these five decades the centre has continued to provide a safe space for young people experiencing homelessness in the capital, whether that was in our original base in Covent Garden or through our existing home in Somers Town, Kings Cross.

Although a lot has changed over that time, our work is as necessary as ever. In response to this we have steadily grown from a team of 3 when the day centre first opened to today's diverse and multi-disciplined team of over 70 staff, delivering a wide range of wraparound services. If housing is the hook for young people to come to New Horizon, then it is our holistic offer that keeps them coming back, providing the stability, safety and support they need to start to rebuild their lives.

Achievements and performance

In the 2024-25 financial year we worked with **1,408** young people, **898** of whom were new to our services. While this is a slight decrease from the 1,479 young people we worked with in the previous year this is an indicator of the changing sector and escalating complexity of needs. While our overall numbers dropped slightly, we saw an increase in those engaging with rough sleeping teams (from **101** people in 2023-24 to **122** people in 2024-25) and young people attending the day centre more regularly (day centre visits - total rather than unique - was 10,116 in 23-24, rising to **10,560** in 24-25).

All of this demonstrates the longer and more extreme nature of young people's homelessness in London as well as the decreasing options we have available to support them, the causes of which are detailed below. Despite the unbelievably difficult circumstances we were still able to deliver positive housing outcomes for **483** young people including:

366

young people accessing emergency accommodation

190

young people accessing long term accommodation

72

young people staying in the Youth Hub we run with Depaul UK



NHYP in Numbers 2024-25



We worked with

1,408

young people,

898 of whom
were new to us



10,560

visits to our day centre

We supported

122

people

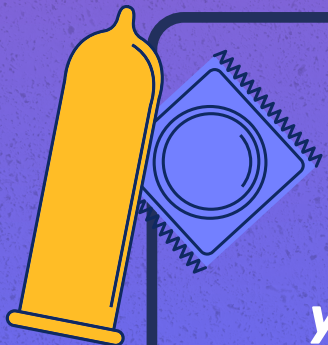
who were rough
sleeping when they
came to us



462

people

attended our day
centre workshops



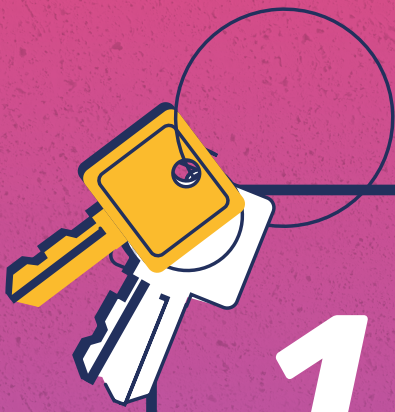
We supported

173

young people

to improve their physical, sexual
and mental health. Our counsellor
delivered **284** sessions





We conducted

1,244

housing advice services and completed
553 housing advice appointments...



...delivering positive housing
outcomes for

483

young people

9,504

approx meals served



We saw a

42%

increase in young people
engaging with our youth
participation offer



We grew our staff team to

75

members

We launched a cross-sector campaign collective of over

150 organisations

who went on to secure the **first parliamentary debate on youth homelessness in 40 years**, worked with **148 parliamentary stakeholders** and delivered the first youth homelessness rally outside the Houses of Parliament with representatives and young people from across the UK.



Delivering high quality, trauma-informed services for any young person that needs our support

Growing rough sleeping

One of the visible manifestations of growing need amongst our community was the increasing numbers of young people ending up rough sleeping. The annual CHAIN statistics for the 2024-25 financial year showed a total of **1,392** young people recorded doing so, up **24%** in a single year and making 18-24 year-olds the fastest growing of all age groups by some margin.

Against this backdrop the work of our new Rough Sleeping team has been critical, working alongside Depaul UK to deliver **26** beds of emergency accommodation at our pioneering Youth Hub project. We better integrated the work of our street outreach colleagues to the Youth Hub team so that we can create more seamless routes for people to be met on the streets and into a warm bed quicker. Despite our best efforts and a staggering **£244,321** that we spent on hotels and backpackers in the year for those with nowhere else to go, we still see people daily for whom all we can do is offer a sleeping bag.



More need, more complexity



In 2024-25 we saw a notable increase in complex needs and longer timelines to house young people who came through our doors. Our day centre remained busy on a daily basis, with an average of **49** young people a day. Many accessed our basic needs services: we served approximately **9,504** meals, conducted **1,244** housing advice services and completed **553** thorough needs assessments.

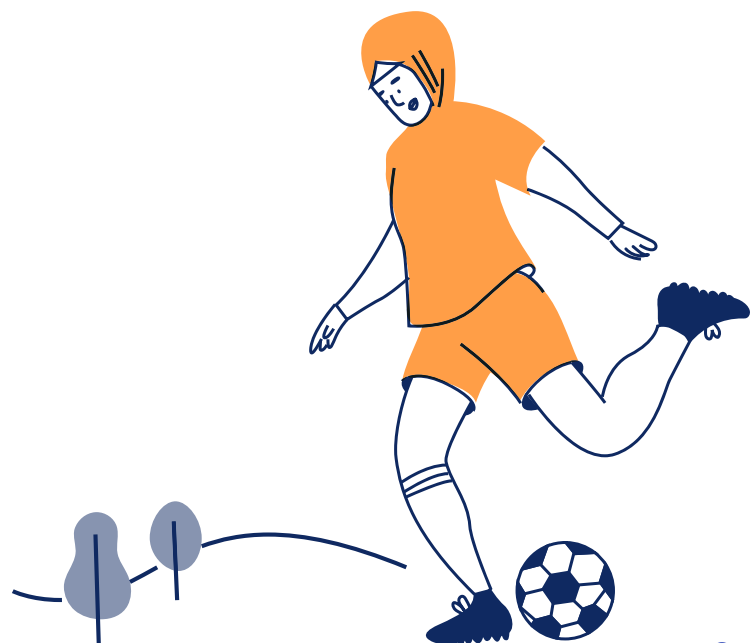
Alongside our basic needs and emergency offer we collaborated with an additional **205** young people to advocate for statutory support, unlock benefits and financial stability and improve access to health, justice and immigration services. Our day centre team delivered a range of workshops to **462** people, spanning creative sessions, jobs, education & training support and independent living skills.

We have continued to see a high rate of refugees and asylum seekers in need of our services, with **43%** of those we supported being newly granted refugees who were evicted from Home Office accommodation into homelessness. These young people face particularly high barriers in accessing services and we're proud that we have continued to work with those who need us most in a sector where many services are being closed down or restricting who can access.

We've also noticed a rise in more complex mental and physical health needs, meaning we were only able to work with fewer young people overall as we were doing more intensive work with a smaller group. Despite this and having a

very small Health Team we still supported **173** young people to improve their physical, sexual and mental health. Our counsellor delivered **284** sessions to **50** young people.

Despite the challenges surrounding our work, there were some very notable success stories in the year as young people's lives transformed because of their potential. In September two of the young players - Gago and Mikaille - from our football team, FC Hope were selected to play for England in the Homeless World Cup in South Korea and despite being a wild card team they reached the final, losing narrowly to Mexico. Around the same time one of the young people staying in our accommodation projects received an offer to study at St Edmunds College, Cambridge after receiving three A*s in their A-levels.



Loss of referral pathways

In August 2023 we started to see a worrying trend of young people being evicted from the **supported accommodation projects** we placed them in. We immediately began escalating this to local authorities of the affected projects and advocating via our policy work to ascertain what was happening. What emerged over the following weeks was that councils had begun independent audits off the back of the **Supported Housing Regulatory Oversight Act**, despite the law not being enforceable yet. Whilst audits were being conducted Housing Benefit payments in many boroughs were paused, forcing providers into bankruptcy, causing aggrieved landlords to harass young people in their homes and pushing young people into debt and homelessness.

This situation continued to escalate during 2024-25, with increasingly more boroughs across London conducting their own audits. We tried hard to challenge this in each borough, contacting council leaders, through pan-London local government and escalated this to central government in partnership with Crisis and other sector organisations to show how a law originally created to end exploitation was



actually leading to an increase in homelessness. This is a difficult and ongoing battle that we are still fighting in 2025-26.

Despite the challenges of ongoing referral partners, our housing team have continued to broker bed spaces with charitable partners into which we have sole referral rights. Across London we now have **47** dedicated accommodation bedspaces – **73** including the Youth Hub – ranging from short stay to longer term arrangements for up to two years. Notably in the year in the review, we began a new partnership with LHA Ltd opening up access to **10** one-bed properties in their shared accommodation hubs across the capital. The first person successfully moved into one of these in June 2024.



New processes, new programmes

After months of bid development we were pleased to be part of the winning bid for the Greater London commissioned serious youth violence services. A new sector-leading alliance between NHYC, Safer London, St. Giles and the Anna Freud Centre was successful in winning the contract for a new service known as VESS (Violence and Exploitation Support Service). The partnership kicked off in August 2024 with NHYC creating a team of new specialist workers to deliver the housing offer, the first time housing has been a clear priority among youth violence and exploitation services. This team deliver slightly different work to our existing Youth Justice offer as it works with more under 18s, their families and wider support systems.

In our day centre, we continued to review our model and support in the year and for the first time in a decade made changes to the daily team meeting that starts and ends each service day. The new 'handover' meeting was designed by a working group of staff to ensure the right level of operational and safeguarding information was passed between the staff working on each day.

New Horizon provides an inclusive space open to all young people, some of whom may have been excluded from other services. In line with our organisational values, we recognise we

work in an environment with individuals who have often experienced trauma. Young people's behaviour is often a response and coping mechanism connected to their past experiences and trauma. Supporting people displaying these behaviours is central to our work and so in November we also made some changes to our Inclusion policy following extensive consultation with staff and young people in the months prior.

Our new policy does this by:

- 1.** Establishing a 5-step process which will support staff to implement proactive measures to address issues before they reach a critical stage, fostering a more preventative approach.
- 2.** Identifying clear processes and actions in the event of serious incidents.
- 3.** Providing a trauma informed framework to manage behaviours of distress and conflict at New Horizon Youth Centre.
- 4.** Clarifying processes to implement boundaries which create a supportive and safer environment for young people and staff.
- 5.** Defining clear ways of working with young people around the expectations at the centre and enabling them to effectively navigate life outside of NHYC.

Investing in Youth Voice

We welcomed a new, full-time Youth Voice worker in the 2024-25 financial year, who dove in and relaunched our Youth Forums with fortnightly Monday evening sessions. We saw a **42%** increase in young people engaging with our youth participation offer, with sessions running the gamut from feedback on our food and activity offer through to in-depth sessions on our new 5-year strategy and direct work to decide our questions and asks for politicians.

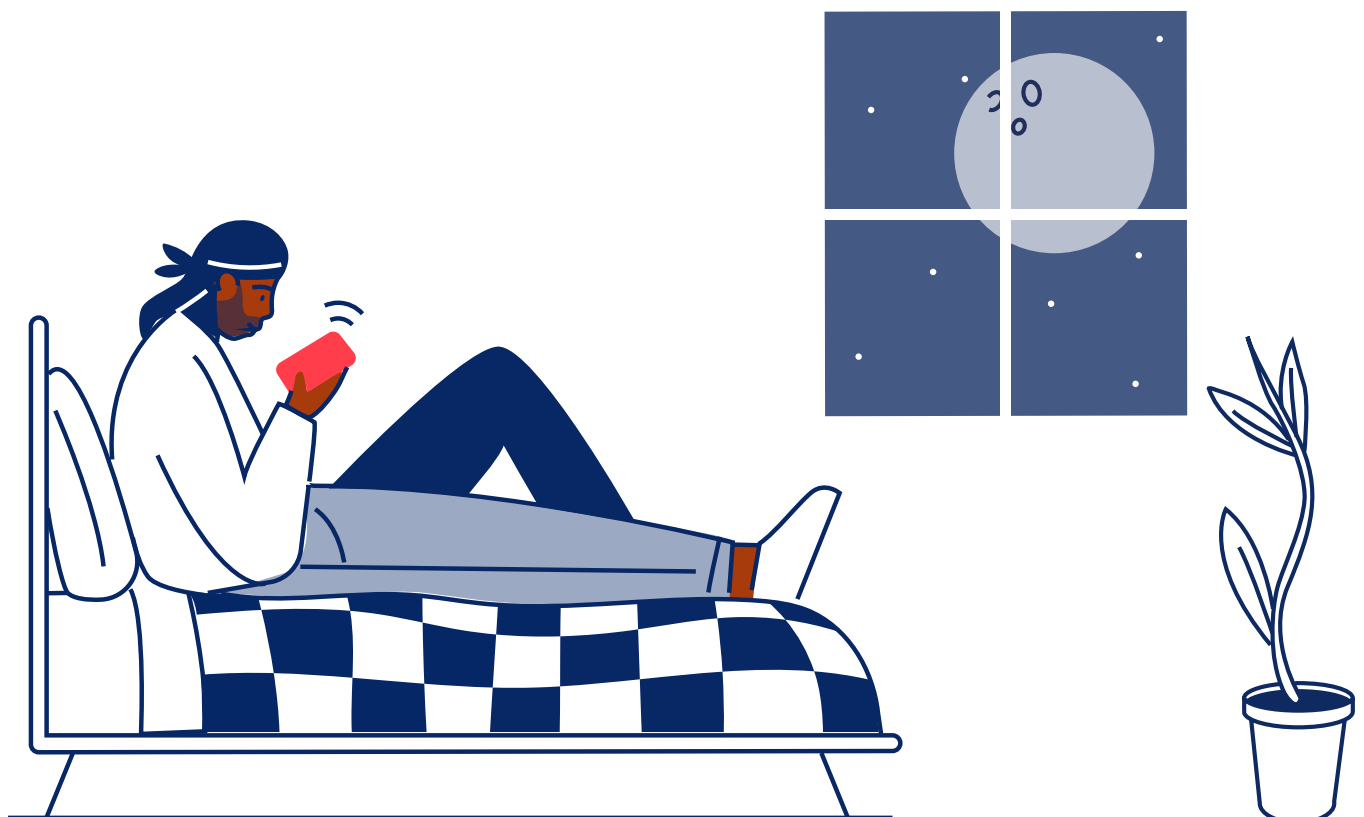


Working with and through others to optimise our offer and maximise our impact

Pan London response to Youth Homelessness

NHYC continues to deliver the London Youth Gateway, a partnership of 7 charities delivering bespoke support to any young person facing homelessness in London. The partners are NHYC, Shelter, Depaul UK, Praxis, Stonewall Housing, akt and Galop. This programme is now in its fourth commission, having supported tens of thousands of young people, with NHYC as lead partner throughout. In the fourth commission we welcomed onboard Praxis, in recognition of the growing number of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants

forced into poverty and homelessness in the capital. We've seen brilliant results from the monthly drop in satellite service the Praxis team have been delivering from the NHYC day centre. The current commission will enter its final year in 2025-26 and our Campaigns, Impact & Partnerships team will be applying for a fifth commission to expand on the programme's successes and increase capacity and specialisms across the partnership.



Sector leading response to serious youth violence

As part of the new VESS Alliance and building on research carried out by New Horizon in 2024, we were also proud to announce our major new systems change project aimed at the youth violence sector, advocating for better practice and collaboration to meaningfully recognize and tackle the role of housing insecurity and homelessness within youth violence and exploitation. After months of consultation and meeting with hundreds of professionals we launched the Blueprints for Change, setting out the interventions we think should be prioritised in this space. We recruited a brand-new role for a Youth Justice Partnerships Manager to deliver this exciting new project alongside our Communications, Impact & Partnerships and Youth Justice teams.

The Blueprints project is divided into five mini projects that interlink with each other:

- **Universal Risk Assessment**

Design and implement a universal assessment to be used by all professionals, statutory and non-statutory, working with young people in any capacity who identify housing issues for young people affected by youth violence.

- **Specialist Accommodation**

Open up existing appropriate bedspaces and develop partnerships with organisations to open specialist accommodation for young people and their families fleeing youth violence.

- **Training**

Tailored training modules for professionals to support with youth homelessness, youth violence, contextual safeguarding and areas supporting this cohort of young people.

- **Sector-specific Communities of Practice**

Spaces with multiple professionals to focus on the intersection of youth violence and youth homeless. Allowing professionals the space to share good practice and contribute to wider systems change dialogues.

- **Met Police Pilot**

A developmental project working with the Met Police to develop guidance around how they provide evidence to support young people with being seen as priority need.



Saying and doing what others won't, so no young person misses out

Taking the fight against youth homelessness to Parliament

In the 2023-24 we launched a campaign known as #PlanForThe129k, a collective of charities uniting around the bid for central government to develop a strategy to end youth homelessness. What began as a group of 11 charities quickly ballooned to over 100 charities across the UK, from small 5 people organisations to large national membership bodies with thousands of members.

In 2024-25 we entered our second year of influencing the UK government of the importance of this issue. We had to rename the collective to #PlanForThe136k as the Centrepoint statistic of how many under-25s approached their council as homeless rose from **129,000 to 136,000**. After Labour won the general election complete with a manifesto commitment to write a 'cross-departmental strategy to end homelessness', we adjusted our ask to have a #YouthHomelessChapter within the promised strategy that recognised and prioritised youth homelessness as a distinct issue.

In the 2024-25 financial year our policy campaign successes included:

- The collective growing to over **150** signatory organisations
- Securing the first Parliamentary debate on youth homelessness in **40** years
- Working with multiple MPs and Members of the House of Lords
- Running a Parliamentary drop in attended by **50** MPs and the Minister for Homelessness
- Giving speeches alongside young people at the All Party Parliamentary Group for Ending Homelessness
- Attending a roundtable with the Minister for Homelessness
- Attending the Labour Party Conference to promote the campaign with MPs, councillors and party members
- Running a Parliamentary rally with **50** young people and staff members from across the collective, attended by **12** MPs and allowing young people with lived experience to directly speak truth to power.

We're really pleased with how influential and far reaching our first major policy campaign became and we believe it is a great beginning to our future campaigns and public affairs work.



Stories to tell, narratives to reframe

Since expanding and investing in our Campaigns, Impact & Partnerships functions, we have been able to increase the quality & quantity of our storytelling and creative work. As our confidence and reach has increased we have also focussed more on producing content in partnership with young people.

In the year in review this, included:

- Our [Mental Health Awareness Week sports videos](#)
- Our 'Hey Keir' podcast-style interviews developed by young experts by experience
- Our [new basketball and women's and men's new football kits](#), co-designed by young people at our day centre
- Our Big Christmas Give [campaign concept and stories](#)
- National media coverage of our work in the [newspapers](#), the [radio](#) and [TV](#)
- Helping develop the [Lacy's World mini-series](#) showing how youth homelessness can be hidden and stigmatised



The improved reach and skill in our messaging has put us in front of an increasingly larger audience, over 2024-25 we saw:

- **72,115** people visit our website
- **837,221** people come across our content on social media
- **39** high quality pieces of press coverage about our work
- The launch of our [TikTok account](#)
- A major celebrity collaboration with actor Will Poulter and rapper and chef Big Zuu for a special edition of our annual summer BBQ, [featured in a double page spread in the Big Issue](#) and gaining us lots of exposure and new followers, as well as several follow up donations.

Throughout all of this increased profile we delivered our message in our approach of 'reframing youth homelessness' around centring potential, strengths and skills of the young people we're lucky enough to support rather than focusing on their trauma or trying to elicit pity. We're proud of what we delivered in 2024-25, especially given the significant pressure on our frontline services and lack of staff capacity to meet the ever-escalating need in the capital.

*Sustaining a well-run organisation that **invests in staff and celebrates the diversity that makes us a success***

Taking care of our staff

Given the difficulty of the operating environment, we have continued to focus on wellbeing with staff, continuing with the implementation of our Wellbeing Policy and new Employer Assistance Programme. We have continued to seek ways to bring people together at quarterly away days and socials. There is tailored and personalised support for frontline staff through supervisions, clinical support and reflective practice – all provided by managers and the NHS Vanguard.

As such we saw some positive increases in staff feedback in our Annual Staff survey with 100% of staff agreeing that they were proud of our work; wanted to contribute to its success; had productive and trusting relationships with their colleagues; believed their work made a difference and understood how their role contributed to our strategy.

We continued our focus on promoting diversity, equity and inclusion throughout the centre and its work in the year, launching our third cohort of our Diversity Leadership Programme for three up and coming leaders within the organisation. The leaders benefit from a dedicated package of support with coaching, mentoring from our Chief Operating Officer and a significant training budget. Members of the previous cohorts have been promoted in new management roles on the back of their involvement.



Upskilling, upscaling

In 2023-24 we reported an increase in our recruitment, staff support and back-office functions. This continued into 2024-25 as we responded to the changing needs of those coming through our doors. We grew our staff team to **75** members, primarily adding resource to our frontline teams. With the launch of the VESS partnership and massive investment in our youth justice functions we decided to split out our streets outreach and youth justice offer to ensure that both remained a distinct and supported part of our work.



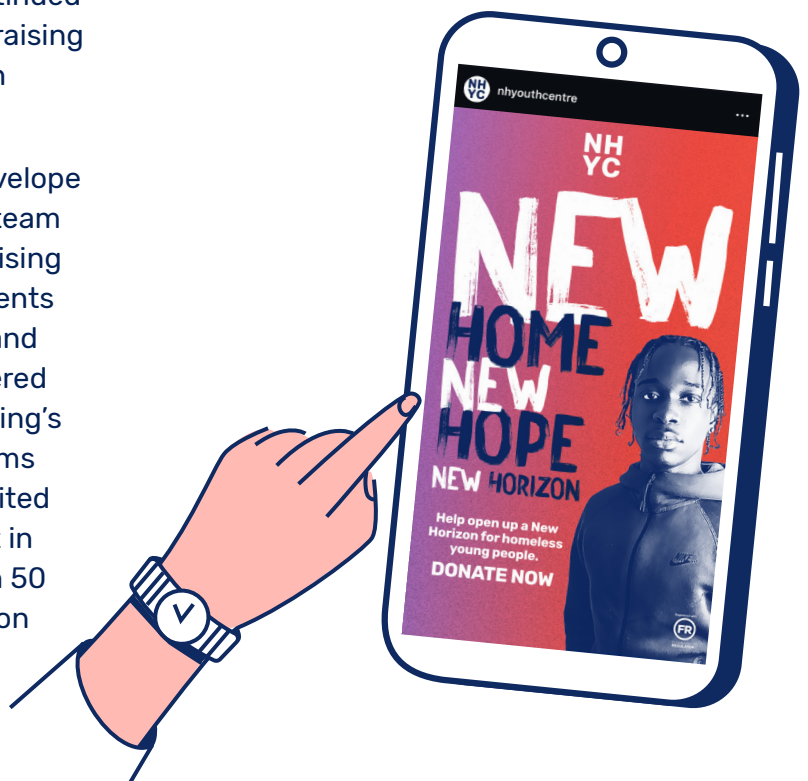
We recruited a Head of Rough Sleeping and created the specialist Rough Sleeping team to ensure we maintained the expertise and investment in this unique part of our services. Throughout these staffing changes we've continued to prioritise our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion workplan and improving our wellbeing offer.

Taking our Fundraising to the next level

It's well known that the third sector is seeing an increasingly difficult fundraising landscape but we have managed to navigate this with some success again this year despite our income growing from £1.6 million in 2019 to over £4.5 million this year. That growth has all been delivered with a relatively small fundraising team with a high return on investment, for every £1 invested in fundraising, our fundraising team manage to raise £17.22 for young people who are homeless. We continued this success into the 2024-25 including raising £60,000 in the Big Christmas Give match funding campaign.

In 2024-25 we continued to push the envelope on fundraising, including expanding the team with additional events and grants fundraising capacity. We delivered a series of new events for both stewardship of existing donors and recruitment of new supporters. We delivered a corporate football tournament on the King's Cross estate where local businesses' teams played against our FC Hope and Faith United teams, raising £10,000. We also took part in our first major sport challenge event with 50 people running the Hackney Half marathon in aid of New Horizon.

As well as events innovations we launched our first major individual donor acquisition campaign, that will continue to run into the 2025-26 financial year. Working with a youth led film production company, we created 'The Sleepover', the hero film for the 'New Hope, New Home, New Horizon' campaign. In just the first phase of the campaign we achieved a 28% growth in individual donations, which we are hoping to outperform in the 2025-26 financial year.



Future plans

The compounding crises of the last few years have given rise to record breaking levels of homelessness, and it is therefore not surprising that many have deemed it 'the worst it has ever been'. But at New Horizon, we know of at least one time when it was as bad – 1967 the year we were founded.

Shocked by what he saw around his offices in the West End, Lord Longford worked to set up London's only day centre for young homeless people and in doing so began a long history of unique provision. But even then, we knew services alone wouldn't solve the problem. That is why so much of our early days also included partnerships (Centrepoint ran their first shelter from the basement of the church we operated in) and a knowledge that we were stronger together when it came to campaigning (we were a proud founding partner of the Campaign for the Homeless and Rootless).

Much has changed since but in 2025, much remains the same. That has been abundantly clear through our recent six-month strategy review and as we look to the future, the answer of the best way ahead, we realise, lies back in our beginnings.

With rough sleeping at record levels and more young people fleeing violence, there's a pressing need and growing gap for specialist emergency response that can support young people in crisis and open up housing for thousands more young people in need. NHYC already excels at this support – we should double down on this and become London's go-to organisation for young people in immediate need. It's a difficult but vital role that plays to our strengths in engaging young people and responding flexibly to their needs.

We are currently both a day centre and youth centre. Whilst both roles remain key to our success, we recognise there are many more youth work centres in London, whereas we are the only youth-specific, homelessness

day centre. Rather than trying to provide everything ourselves for all young people until they turn 25, we can focus on being excellent at supporting people all the way up to getting housed and then define a clear offer for resettlement and move-on out of the service. Doing so makes our increasingly impossible mission possible again.

By getting back to our beginnings we will lean on our unique heritage as the only youth-specific day centre and drop-in for in London and continue our long and proud history of being here for any young person who finds themselves homeless in the capital. Doing so means some tough choices about who we cannot support. Our focus will shift to those in more immediate need, prioritising over those we have already housed and more focused at moving people on successfully at this point.

During our last strategy cycle we redeveloped our confidence as a campaigner and much as we did in the early days of the centre, we will ensure we use our insights and growing profile to change the systems that push young people through our doors. To do so we will need to redouble our internal efforts, ensuring staff have the resources and support they need through a challenging five years ahead.

Our new strategy launches in winter 2026 and we will look forward to updating our supporters on it as our next financial year draws to a close.



Thank you to all our supporters

***Without the following generous donors none
of our work would have been possible.***

| | | |
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As well as the countless individuals, charities and companies that have given their time, their money, in kind support and their commitment to supporting our vital work.

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