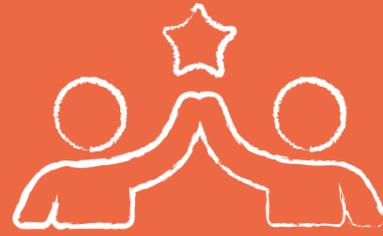
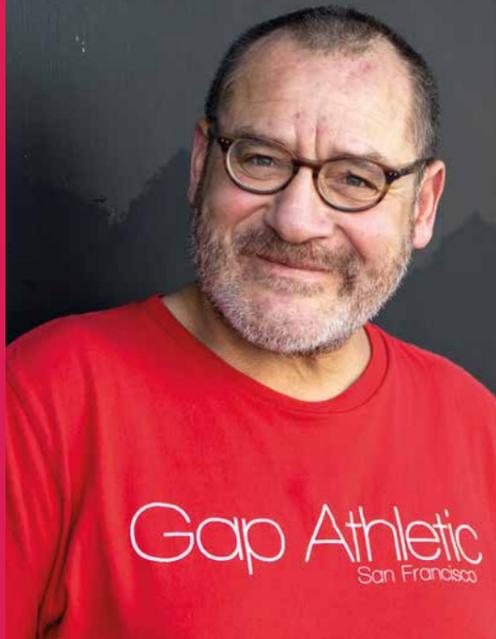


Strategy 2021-2026

# Single Homeless Project





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The people featured in this strategy are all clients of Single Homeless Project. We would like to thank Andrejs, Dennis, Gary, Juan, LP, Maris, Michael, Mo, Parminder, Pauline, Simon, Sophie and Tyler for giving up their time and being such brilliant company during our photoshoot. And our thanks to Claudia Janke who captured all of their images so well.

## Introduction

# Our vision is of a society where everyone has a place to call home and the chance to live a fulfilling life.

Single Homeless Project was founded in 1975 by a group of six homeless men seeking an alternative to rough sleeping or staying in common lodging houses or spikes. Whilst we have grown beyond recognition from those early days, these origins have continued to shape the way we work and our vision of a society where everyone has a place to call home and the chance to live a fulfilling life.

The pandemic has reconfigured the world, making it more unpredictable and forcing us to adapt, but with this, it has also presented us with opportunities for bringing about change. We have strengthened our position as a significant provider of homeless and homelessness prevention services in London and we now help more people than ever. We have increased our service reach both geographically and for people at different stages of homelessness, expanded our specialist programmes designed to address unmet needs and delivered the national Fulfilling Lives initiative in Camden and Islington as lead agency. This growth has been enabled, in part, by the reputation we have built for the quality of our services and for the commitment of our staff, and their willingness to go the extra mile for our clients.

### Our Way of Working

We believe that services should create environments that aid and do not hinder in people's recovery. We have developed a structured and evidenced based approach to supporting our clients called 'Our Way of Working'. This enables us to work effectively with people with multiple disadvantage who represent a significant proportion of our clients. This term describes people who experience several problems at the same time, such as mental ill health, homelessness, drug and alcohol misuse, offending and family breakdown and who are likely to have struggled over long periods, let down by our support systems. Our approach is based on the conviction that, no matter what challenges they face, everyone we work with has the capacity to take control of their lives and to shape their own future.

### An uncertain future

The economic fallout from the pandemic has put enormous pressure on many Londoners and we are likely to feel the impact for years to come. With unemployment rising, young people disproportionately affected, and more people facing precarious and stressful living situations, we could well see an increase

in those forced to sleep rough on our city's streets. We are more determined than ever to ensure that single people experiencing homelessness in London remain able to access the services they need, and that as a charity, we have a positive and sustained impact on our clients' lives.

### Our increased focus

Many people forced to sleep rough experience chronically high levels of poor physical health. In response to this, our new strategy increases our focus on tackling health inequality. We have introduced specialist health leads to support clients to access the care they deserve. We have also broadened our programme of wellbeing and recovery initiatives to provide clients with more opportunities to take part in sport and other physical activity because we know that by doing so, they will greatly improve their overall health.

Public services and systems designed to address homelessness should work effectively

for everyone who needs them. But too many people are let down by outdated approaches and one size fits all services. We're raising our ambition to influence service design and system change. By using our insight and expertise and by amplifying our client's voices, we will become a voice for change.

### Our new strategic priorities

Our new five-year strategy sees an evolution of our work, making the most of our collective experience, expertise and ambition. We focus on four strategic priorities: delivering urgent services to single Londoners experiencing homelessness, helping our clients on their journey to independence, developing new services that address unmet needs and influencing service design and system change.

The years ahead will be challenging and unpredictable, but we are ready for them.

**Liz Rutherford** Chief Executive  
**Jon Rosser** Chair of Board of Trustees

**Our growth has been enabled, in part, by the reputation we have built for the quality of our services and for the commitment of our staff, and their willingness to go the extra mile for our clients.**

# Our values

Our values inspire and challenge us as an organisation. They underpin the work and behaviour of everyone at Single Homeless Project, from how we work with clients and each other, to the decision making of the Board and the Executive Management Team.

## Clients hold the key

As an organisation founded by people experiencing homelessness, we believe in the fundamental right of every individual to take control of their lives. Tailoring our support to their needs and aspirations, we work with people to build their capacity for self-determination, so that they can shape their own futures.

## Going the extra mile

We go the extra mile for the people we work with, many of whom have multiple and complex needs for which there are no quick and easy fixes. We keep working with people no matter how challenging it may be, and we don't give up on them.

## People, not problems

We see our clients as people, not problems. As well as offering practical support, we believe it's essential to give people the opportunity to discover a sense of purpose, to grow in confidence, express themselves and build meaningful relationships.

## A voice for change

We are committed to tackling the underlying causes of homelessness and social exclusion, and we will use what we learn to make the case for prevention and systemic change. We are also passionate about promoting the voices of people who have been forced into homelessness, whose stories often go unheard.

## Supporting staff

We maintain an inclusive culture in which staff are respected, supported, and listened to. We value the contribution of all staff and volunteers and we are a diverse organisation that pulls together, in a spirit of mutual trust and co-operation. We encourage creativity and new ideas, prizing innovation as a means of achieving our mission.

## Honest and open

We are honest and open in our dealings with clients, staff and volunteers, partners, supporters and other stakeholders. We will do what we say we will do, and we will communicate proactively.

## Clients hold the key

Tailoring our support so that clients can shape their own futures

## Going the extra mile

We keep working with people no matter how challenging it may be



# Our strategic priorities

Our strategy focusses on four strategic priorities: delivering urgent services to single Londoners experiencing homelessness, helping our

clients on their journey to independence, developing new services that address unmet needs and influencing service design and system change.

1

Meet the urgent needs for more single homeless Londoners



2

Support more people into independence



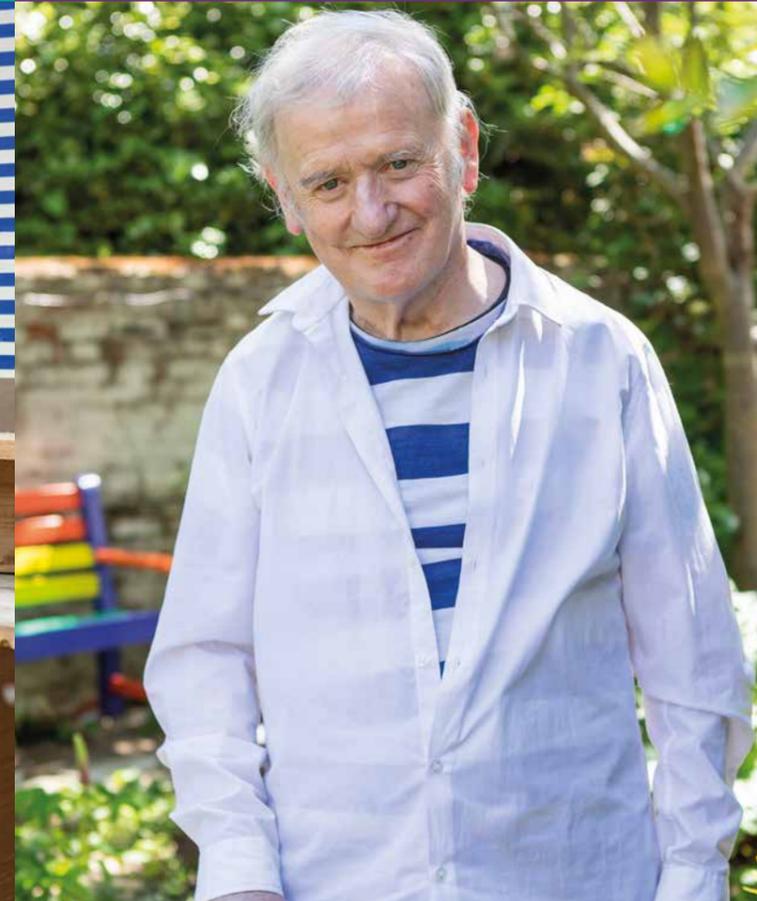
3

Develop, fund and deliver services that address unmet needs



4

Influence service design and system change with client voice, data and insight



1

## Meet the urgent needs for more single homeless Londoners



As human beings, we all deserve a safe and stable place to call home so we can live our lives and thrive. When that right is threatened, it's a crisis and the need for support is urgent. Acting with speed, understanding and expertise can make all the difference.

## Rough sleepers

Everyone has the right to a safe and stable home. The conditions that the pandemic created and the response we saw from the Government, charities and organisations put a spotlight on what can be done, when the will is there, to dramatically reduce the number of people forced to sleep rough on our city's streets. In partnership with commissioners and policy makers, we will work hard to make the most of these fundamental changes in approach and ensure everyone on our streets gets the support they need, and in the way that they need it to move away from rough sleeping.

As a charity focussing on single people experiencing homelessness, we know that many of our clients face great health inequalities, living for years with untreated chronic, long-term conditions. By placing health at the centre of our offer in hostels and shelters and supporting fair access to healthcare, we hope to reduce the appalling health inequalities faced by our clients.

### What we will do



- Expand the housing options for rough sleepers, reducing street numbers and returns to the street
- Focus on health in our hostels and shelters, deploying Specialist Health Leads and provide hospital discharge support and designated beds, reducing preventable deaths and unnecessarily prolonged ill health
- Increase our specialist support for women who experience multiple disadvantage
- Identify solutions for people with chronic health problems requiring long-term housing with care

## Young people

The pandemic has been disproportionately tough on young people in terms of the social impact. Young workers were particularly hard hit with the loss of jobs in retail and hospitality and the temporary closure of education facilities widened attainment gaps. Poor mental health as well as family and relationship breakdowns increased and social distancing meant many more of those who had been sofa surfing were faced with no choice but to sleep rough on our capital's streets than ever before. A critical lack of youth-specific affordable housing in London combined with restrictions in the benefits system has exacerbated all of this. These impacts will be felt for years to come.

When a young person has nowhere to call home, it has a significant and long-term impact on their future, affecting mental and physical health, disrupting education and employment prospects and increasing a risk of exploitation and abuse. Every young person deserves a place to call home and the right support and opportunities so that they can flourish and achieve their potential.

We help young people by providing safe, welcoming places to stay, support into employment and education and therapy to address trauma, poor mental health, substance misuse and other vulnerabilities. We also work hard to help Looked After Children (Children under 18 who are unable to live with their families) who face an abrupt transition to adult services at 18 to access the services, accommodation and support they are entitled to from their local authority.

### What we will do

- Subject to a financial viability review, increase the number of bedspaces for spot purchased schemes, particularly in south and east London, working closely with councils to intervene quickly
- Embed a therapeutic offer within our youth schemes to help young people work through traumas and transition into adulthood successfully, including offering an activity programme and employment offer at each of our sites
- Incorporate our approach to working with young people within a published 'Our Way of Working' framework, and seeking external evaluation and accreditation of our services
- Publish an impact report alongside our way of working, promoting our youth offer to ensure we are the 'go to' service for Children and Families Commissioners



## Homelessness prevention

Although rough sleeping is the most visible form of homelessness, far more people experience 'hidden homelessness'. Pushed to the brink, these are people sleeping on the sofas of family and friends, living in cars and squats or other temporary accommodation with no stability or security. There are also significant numbers of people who have their own accommodation but are at risk of homelessness.

By developing the right services and intervening at an early stage, we can give people the support they need to relieve the pressure in their lives, get the help they deserve and prevent homelessness.

### What we will do

- Expand the Single Homeless Prevention Service to more London Boroughs
- Work with commissioners of preventative services, ensuring they target those most at risk of imminent homelessness
- Complete and publish research on hidden homelessness amongst women and take forward recommendations
- Develop innovative and targeted approaches to reaching our clients that build on our successes during the pandemic



2

## Support more people into independence

Many of our clients come to us at a crisis point in their lives, pushed to the edge, and need urgent support. No matter how our relationship begins, we always support every client's aspiration for their own future and independence.



## Housing

London has a housing problem. Due to the lack of supply, social housing isn't really an option for many Londoners experiencing homelessness and private sector rents are far more expensive than the rest of the UK. Income and Local Housing Allowance hasn't kept pace with the increase in rents which really limits choice, especially for the under-35's. All of this has created a pressure cooker situation and the risk of evictions and repeat homelessness has increased dramatically.

We are committed to lobbying for changes in housing legislation, building strong relationships with private rented sector landlords and agents and ensuring that our clients have access to good quality, stable and affordable homes.

### What we will do



- Build our network of private rented sector landlords, working with them to improve the standard of property offered and make rent deposits more affordable
- Challenge stigma and negative preconceptions of our client group by providing training and guidance at landlord forums and include better practice training as part of service level agreements for all new landlord partnerships
- Develop a consistent organisation wide approach to preparing all clients to sustain private tenancies in the long term
- Increase access to our PRS services
- Partner with recognised agencies to highlight inequalities and failures within the housing system and play our part in advocating for change
- Create move on packs and an internal rent deposit scheme so that every one of our clients has a move on option into the private rented sector

## Employment

Many of our clients want to work and getting a job can be a crucial step in leaving homelessness behind for good. The rate of unemployment in London has historically been higher than in the rest of the country and has risen throughout the pandemic, widening our city's economic and social inequalities. There has been a substantial fall in the type of job opportunities many of our clients were accessing pre-pandemic and we face a long period of uncertainty in the employment market.

Although the landscape remains unclear, we are committed to ensuring every one of our clients is offered support with their career goals and to find employment in their chosen field. Everyone deserves that chance.

### What we will do



- Through our Achieving Potential service, we will provide routes into sustainable employment for our clients, including extra support for those who require a career change due to the pandemic and those with No Recourse to Public Funds
- Roll out our in-house employability skills programme, expanding our specialist support for clients with ongoing needs
- Build on our employer engagement activities to ensure we remain relevant and responsive as the UK economy recovers, tackle misperceptions and increase awareness of the skills, strengths and potential of our clients
- Expand our Peer Mentor programme so that our clients can benefit from the mutual respect, encouragement and judgement-free support that someone with shared experiences can give
- Increase opportunities for clients to get jobs within Single Homeless Project



3

## Develop, fund and deliver services that address unmet needs



Historically, most of the services we provide to people experiencing homelessness in London have been funded through public expenditure. We know, through our many years of working with clients, that whilst these services are essential and address basic needs, they don't always meet all the needs of our clients.

Services are more effective if clients have been involved in their design. By using our expertise and taking a more client-informed approach, we can improve outcomes and break the cycle of homelessness.

### What we will do



- Actively engage our clients in identifying their needs and aspirations and work together to design services that better meet their needs
- Continue to identify gaps in publicly funded services for single homeless people, and secure funding to develop services
- Research and evaluate innovative approaches to support more single homeless people
- Focus on fundraising and develop strategic partnerships so we can develop services and expand pilot projects into London-wide programmes that we know address the unmet needs of our clients



4

## Influence service design and system change with client voice, data and insight



Homelessness hurts us all and our society is far stronger when everyone has a place within it. By using our insight and expertise and by amplifying our client's voices, we will become a voice for change, particularly on matters that impact homelessness in London.

We will listen carefully to our clients who will inform what we say and to whom about the issues they face. We will lead change where we can make the greatest impact and lend our voice to support other's campaigns on significant sector issues.



### What we will do



- Learn from client experiences and work together to inform our service development and shape our influencing
- Bolster our resources on research, data and influencing to support our ambitions for change
- Work in partnership to shape healthcare and statutory services for people facing multiple disadvantage
- Work with professional bodies and organisations to improve housing in the private rented sector
- Build on the legacy of the Fulfilling Lives in Camden and Islington programme to share best practice and create system change for people who face multiple disadvantage.

# Building a strong organisation

Underpinning our strategy are four substantial areas we will continue to invest in: our people, our systems, our fundraising and our communications.

## Valuing our people

Our culture remains true to our distinctive history and journey to date. We work in a psychologically informed way and are inclusive and supportive to enable everyone to contribute their best to a common vision and mission. We will continue to promote diversity and inclusion in everything we do and support people to learn and to work flexibly and collaboratively. We will invest in and enable our staff, volunteers and service delivery partners such as funders, contractors, corporate partners to go the extra mile so that we achieve the best outcomes for our clients.

## Effective and efficient systems

We will ensure that our IT systems enhance the experience of staff and clients alike, that we create efficiencies in our financial processes, that our supporters have the best digital experience with us and that we embrace the positive changes in our ways of working developed during the pandemic. All of this will ensure that we deliver exceptional services to our clients, our staff are rewarded for their work and our supporters and partners are recognised for the contributions.

## Fundraising and support

Fundraised income and external support for our work have significantly increased over the last four years. Our ambition is to continue this trend and ensure that our income from fundraising will help to deliver on this new strategy



We will grow both restricted and unrestricted charity income, increasing our support from the corporate sector, public fundraising and high-value donors. We will develop long-term partnerships with charitable Trusts and Foundations to ensure the continuous growth of our non-commissioned projects and programmes designed to address the unmet needs of our service users.

## Communications and relationships

We will amplify our voice and that of our clients with the ambition to become a voice for change, grow our services, collaborate with others in the health, criminal justice system, homelessness and housing sectors and build strong relationships with our colleagues, supporters and clients.



## Single Homeless Project

Head Office  
245 Gray's Inn Road  
London WC1X 8QY  
Tel: 0204 509 8300  
[shp.org.uk](http://shp.org.uk)

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