

St Basils - Who we are

St Basils is a Registered Provider (Housing Association), a Registered Company and Charity with over 45 years track record of providing a holistic range of accommodation and support services for young people aged 16-25 who are homeless, at risk or in conflict.

The stereotypes of homelessness can all too quickly attach themselves to young people and trap them in a deficit world and unhelpful pathway. A focus only on need, risks and problems can overshadow talents, strengths and ambition.

We want young people who come to St Basils to have the opportunity to develop a different narrative; to have the safety, security and support to visualise a brighter future and to take advantage of the resources, friendships, opportunities and put in the hard work to make that better future a reality.

What we do

St Basils is one of the largest organisations working with young people who are homeless or at risk in the country and is the largest regional organisation of its kind.

We operate over 40 sites in Birmingham, Solihull, Coventry, Walsall, Sandwell, North Worcestershire and Warwickshire offering over 500 units of accommodation and a range of prevention and support services.

We recognise that homelessness is fuelled by both systemic and personal issues. Whilst our services are focussed on the individual, we contribute to national policy and systemic change.

We take an outcomes focussed approach providing a range of services based on an integrated pathway model, aimed at preventing both primary and secondary homelessness and increasing planned, successful transitions. We are commissioned by Government to promote nationally the Positive Integrated Pathway preventing youth homelessness, first developed in 2012, refreshed in 2015 and again in 2019. Supplemented in 2015 by the Care Leaver Accommodation and Support Pathway developed in partnership with Barnardos and most recently the Youth Justice Accommodation Pathway in 2017.

We have multifaceted engagement mechanisms to ensure young people are co-authors in their preferred future at individual and collective level. These include our Youth Council, Youth Scrutiny Panels, Youth Non Exec Directors as well as National Youth Voice including National Youth Reference Group and national Youth Homeless Parliament.

Multi-Agency collaborative approaches

We manage the multi-agency Youth Hub in Birmingham which sees over 3,600 young people each year and prevents 92% from experiencing homelessness. The Youth Hub is a national exemplar of multi-agency working in order to prevent youth homelessness and in April 2018 took on the statutory responsibilities in partnership with Birmingham City Council to prevent and relieve youth homelessness. Managed by St Basils, co-located services from Birmingham City Council's Children's Services and Housing department ensure that every young person between 16-25 is greeted and assessed and receives appropriate assistance to prevent where possible their homelessness and to provide a safe solution where not. The Hub is the single referral point for access to all commissioned accommodation and support services for young people in Birmingham.

Since 2017, we have also managed the Youth Hub in Solihull as part of the Borough's prevention pathway.

A member of the national End Youth Homelessness Alliance, we are hugely proud that Birmingham is the first City in the country to commit to taking a collective approach to End Youth Homelessness.

A Psychologically Informed Environment

St Basils accommodates circa 1500 young people each year in our supported accommodation. 78% of those are not engaged in education, training or employment when they come to us and 76% re-engage during their time with us. 92% leave us in a planned positive way moving on to independent living.

We have long recognised that providing accommodation alone is an inadequate response to the combination of factors associated with youth homelessness. Our services aim to provide a holistic response based on individual need and experience as young people make the transition to adulthood. We have taken a whole organisation approach to becoming a Psychologically Informed Environment (PIE organisation) and have attracted interest nationally and internationally in the approach and the outcomes. This approach includes training for all staff in psychological approaches; reflective practice for all support staff from experienced Psychologists; a high standard of buildings symbolising respect and ambition; an alignment of all methodologies with a psychological understanding; co-design of services with young people.

Since 2013, we have been working with the University of Birmingham to develop and deliver an accredited Mental Skills Training Programme for young people, who are struggling to believe in themselves sufficiently to engage. The 10 week programme supports the development of self-confidence and resilience and has demonstrated significant results to date.

Fair Chance Programme – Rewriting Futures

From 2015-17, we delivered the government's Social Investment Programme, Fair Chance in Birmingham, Solihull, Walsall, Coventry and Wyre Forest. The second largest in the country supported by 5 Social Investors, our programme, Rewriting Futures, has supported 351 young people over 3 years, exceeding projected outcomes. This experience has informed our engagement with young people with multiple and complex needs.

Young People's Needs

The challenges young people face are made up of interlinked strands:

- structural and environmental challenges, and
- personal or internal challenges

Our analysis is that in order to help the young people we support to make sustained positive changes, we need to focus on both sets of challenges.

At a personal level with young people this means housing related support, work and training, emotional and social development and social capital. It means forging stronger links with specialist services, including more targeted integrated approaches with health and education, training and employment.

At a structural level we will continue to work with and influence policy makers, strategic partners, commissioners and stakeholders.

We have a strategy which is focused on delivering a range of medium term outcomes and longer term impacts for and with young people.

The impact we would like to achieve:

“We want the young people we work with to leave St Basils with a legacy of skills, knowledge, experiences, emotional and social resilience and contacts that enable them to continue growing and maturing as they become young adults. They will be equipped to make the most of the opportunities they encounter and to avoid severe and multiple disadvantage.”

This means that investment in enhancing a young person's social, emotional, skills and problem solving capital, so that they have the best start possible when they move on from St Basils.

Our experience is that if we can engage the young person in a successful relationship with a trusted adult, there is a greater chance that they will take up the opportunities available, will stick with the programme and will ultimately leave in a positive planned way. In particular we know that re-engagement with education, training and employment is critical for sustainable independence and we prioritise investment in this area.

Key principles and assumptions about engagement and change

There are some key principles that we think underpin the success we have had, these are not complicated or hard to understand but they can be hard to put into action.

- Being flexible about how young people contribute
- Taking what people say seriously
- Being honest about what can and can't be done
- Providing support and encouragement for Youth Voice members
- Being prepared to try out new ideas and learn from them
- Treating young people with dignity and respect and responding to their energy and commitment positively
- Valuing and promoting the diversity of young people
- Promoting fair access to all young people using St Basils

We have a set of assumptions about involvement and working with young people which underpin all our work including Youth Voice, the most relevant are shown below:

- The more young people can be engaged in deciding about their own lives, their environment and their communities the more likely they are to successfully move into independence
- When young people have tangible evidence that they can succeed and change their own world for the better they make rapid progress on their journey
- The more young people can contribute to the running of St Basils the more effective and relevant we will become and young people will see that they can influence the world around them

- Young people need to understand their experience both from an individual perspective (the inside) and from a collective perspective (the outside) by joining these two perspectives together young people can develop a critical analysis of the world they live in.
- Positive social networks reduce the risk of further exclusion, increase the range of resources and skills available to a person and helps to smooth out the inevitable up and downs of growing up.
- Services and networks that reflect a young person's cultural and emotional world make it more likely that they will form positive relationships and find positive role models.
- Services that are seen by others as socially valued can contribute to a young person's sense of self-worth and promote positive change'

Our Credentials

- Level A Housing related support provider across all services
- Birmingham City Housing Partnership awards 2012 (Winner for Tenant Involvement; Highly commended for PIE development)
- National Youth Homelessness Scheme Centre of Excellence 2007, 2008, 2009
- Housing Corporation GOLD award for preventing youth homelessness 2006
- Stonewall top 100 employers for LGBT staff 2007
- Audit Commission Inspection – Top rating 2003
- Chamber of Commerce – Diversity in Employment Award 2006
- BMEspark – highly commended 2006 (services to vulnerable people in BME communities)
- In Biz Award for Customer Engagement 2005
- Investors in People 2005, 2008, 2011, 2014
- FBHO National Diversity Award
- Matrix Quality Standard for Information, Advice & Guidance
- Foyer Federation Accreditation
- Chartered Institute of Housing Branch Innovation Award (STaMP- Schools Training and Mentoring Programme)
- Facilitator of National Youth Reference Group (NYRG) 2008-2018
- Facilitator of National Youth Homelessness Parliament 2013 -2018
- Provision of government funded National Youth Homelessness Advisers
- UK Housing Award Winner 2018 – Outstanding contribution to Homelessness

Our Funding

Our Income in 2019/20 was £11.7million of which 42% is Supporting people contractual income; 37% is from rents and charges; 21% is from charitable and other income.