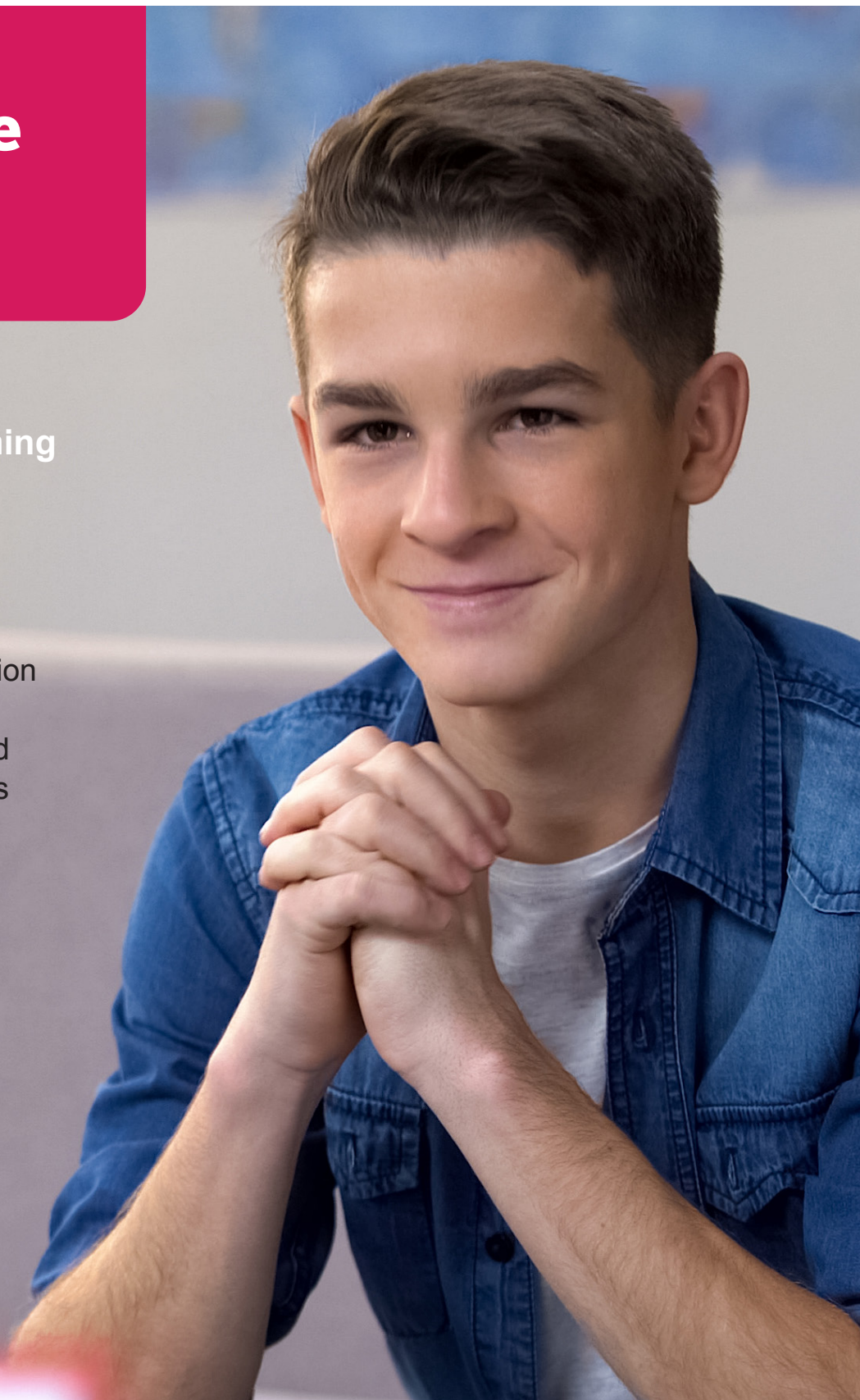


“The experience we didn’t have”

Preventing young
people from becoming
homeless.

A report into the
learning from the Youth
Homelessness Prevention
Services delivered by
Roundabout and funded
by the National Lottery’s
Reaching Communities
Programme.

Anna Whalen
August 2021



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List of abbreviations:

ACEs

Adverse Childhood Experiences

MHCLG

the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

PSHE

Personal, Social, Health and Economic education: the part of the National Curriculum through which education work on housing and homelessness usually takes place

H-CLIC

the Homelessness Case Level Collection, the data specification and system which local authorities use to record statutory homelessness case level data

ETE

education, training and employment

NEET

not in education, employment or training

SAR

Shared Accommodation Rate – the housing costs/benefit payable to most single under 35 year olds living in the private rented sector on low incomes unless they are exempt from this. The SAR is intended to cover the cost of a room in a shared house

SRE

Sex and Relationship Education



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Executive summary

In 2015 Roundabout, a youth homelessness charity in South Yorkshire, applied for five years of funding from the National Lottery's Reaching Communities England programme. In 2016 the organisation was informed that their bid was successful. The services funded by the National Lottery started in July 2016 and will end in June 2021.

The proposal and subsequent services focus on preventing homelessness amongst 16 – 25-year-olds through the delivery of two distinct but interlinked services: the Peer Education Programme and the Drop In Service.

In order to understand the work taking place under the Reaching Communities funding, we drew on service-level data, associated local authority homelessness data published through the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), internal reports, national research, and semi-structured interviews with stakeholders (including teachers, local authority officers and young people who are Roundabout peer educators). We also looked at the basic case details of 12 young people using the Drop In Service to understand a little more about their journeys into and out of housing insecurity and homelessness.

The learning from these services is relevant to any agency which is interested in preventing homelessness amongst young people: local authorities; combined authorities; voluntary agencies; and housing associations across England.

This report has been written in March 2021, before the Reaching Communities funding ends and after 12 months of the Covid-19 global pandemic. The national lockdowns and social distancing measures have had an impact on the way in which almost all public services are delivered, including the ones which are the focus of this report.

The **Peer Education Programme** reaches around 3,000 children and young people per year who are at school, college or in youth agencies. Through interactive sessions, it raises awareness and provides local information on the realities of homelessness. The Programme is delivered by young people with lived experience of homelessness who are trained and supported by the full-time Peer Education worker. Sessions are usually delivered through the Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) part of the National Curriculum. Of the 27 schools in Sheffield, 20 have had input from the Peer Education Programme, with 15 schools being 'regulars', with sessions consistently delivered over several years.

The second area which was funded is **the Drop In Service**. This service provides advice, information and support to prevent homelessness amongst young people. It has a base in Sheffield city centre which is open five days a week. A Mediation Worker post, funded by Sheffield City Council, is also based in the Drop In Service. The Service works with between 400 – 500 young people each year. Many seek advice before they are homeless, whilst still living with parents or family but a significant proportion every year are already homeless.

Both of the services are part of Roundabout's larger Homeless Prevention Service. This also contains a specialist mediation service; a small team offering advice and support on employment, education and training; workers who help young people to access tenancies in the private rented sector; and the 'Future Builders' programme, training young people in building trades and providing high quality but low-cost housing. These other prevention services are inextricably linked to the Peer Education Programme and to the Drop In Service. We found strong evidence from

data and the case histories of young people that together the services provide a comprehensive range of options which assist young people in moving forward with their lives as young adults without threat of homelessness. More than any other component, the Mediation Service links to both the Peer Education Service and the Drop In Service.

By using the national youth homelessness prevention framework, the 'Positive Pathway', (see Appendix One), as well as data, research, and interviews, the report looks at the efficacy of the work of both services and whether or not they reached the targets that were originally agreed within the funding agreement with the National Lottery.

In 2016, there was no reliable baseline on numbers from which to monitor any progress. Roundabout was mindful of this, and a longitudinal study was planned over five years to track outcomes and impacts but it was never commissioned, due to difficulties getting data matched with the local authority's records of young people.

What could never have been predicted when the funding was awarded in 2015 was the development of a global pandemic which has now lasted for over 12 months, and continues to change the ways in which services are delivered. Inevitably, the peer education work in schools and colleges has been affected, as has the way in which the Drop In Service operates. There is no doubt that the Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on numbers in 2020/21. However, there is also some useful learning from the national lockdowns: new ways of reaching and talking with parents and young people, as well as stronger partnerships (particularly with Sheffield City Council) have been attributed to overcoming the challenges presented over the last 12 months.

Another factor which could not have been predicted was a significant change in the homelessness legislation in April 2018, as new duties to prevent and relieve homelessness were introduced for any eligible applicant who is homeless or threatened with homelessness within 56 days. This did not alter the way in which the Drop In Service worked with young people, or the numbers who came through for help, but it did constitute a new operating environment for all local housing authorities, who now assist under statutory duties many more single people as a result.

The work delivered through the Reaching Communities funding to date has delivered against all of the outcomes that were agreed, despite the last year of service interruption and change.

Outcome 1: Young people report an increase in their awareness and understanding of homelessness and where to access support.

Outcome 2: Young People at risk are more resilient and better able to deal with family conflict, and therefore more likely to stay in the family home.

Outcome 3: Young people have improved knowledge and skills needed to access appropriate, planned accommodation, when needed

Outcome 4: Peer educators report an improvement in confidence, self-belief, social skills and capacity to integrate

Outcomes 1 and 4, both of which relate to the Peer Education Programme, were easily met with large numbers of young people each year reporting increased knowledge and new Peer Educators being trained and growing in confidence as a result of their work with the Programme.



Outcome 2 was partially met. Young people did report in large numbers that they were more likely to stay at home after attending a peer education session, but evidence, in terms of actual numbers, was not consistently collected or available for matching.

Outcome 3 had contained a target stating that, by the end of the five years, 450 young people a year would be able to access secure housing through the Drop In Service. This target has been partially met, but has been impacted significantly by the Covid-19 pandemic, in both year 4 and 5 of the National Lottery funding. Until that point, the data suggests this target would have been met by the end of Year 5. The target was, arguably, challenging: by way of context, Sheffield City Council reported in 2019/20 that 1,569 households of all ages, not only young people, had their homelessness prevented or relieved across all client groups and ages. Comparing the Roundabout target of 450 young people a year to the Sheffield City Council actual performance figures indicates that if achieved, the 450 young people would be a substantial number, equivalent to nearly a quarter of the total number of positive outcomes achieved by the Sheffield City Council statutory service for all age groups.

The Peer Education Programme is one of the few examples nationally of a comprehensive approach to upstream prevention. Learning from this needs to be shared more widely. The group interview with five Peer Educators highlighted the positive impacts on their own lives, as well as the roles they play in trying to avert young people from homelessness. The teachers we interviewed were equally as positive about the Programme, noting high levels of student engagement in the lessons and how easy it was to work with Roundabout.

Sessions planned with schools in other areas of South Yorkshire were postponed due to the pandemic, but these should resume, giving a wider reach across the sub-region. Peer educators thought that more work with students in Year 10, 11 and colleges would help in preventing more young people from becoming homeless, with young people knowing what to do if things at home were difficult and asking for help earlier. This view was borne out by Drop In Service data, which showed higher numbers of 17, 18 and 19-year-olds asking for help.

We looked at data from 290 young people in 2019/20 who had received help from the Drop In Service and from other constituent parts of the Homeless Prevention Service. Their outcomes were to either stay at home with family or friends, or move into either the private rented sector or supported housing. Of these, nearly a quarter – 64 young people – were sofa-surfing when they first approached for help. A further 5.5% were rough sleeping at the point at which they were assisted.

The Drop In Service has a high rate of success with young people. It was clear from all of the evidence that the service plays a critical role in a large city and has the potential to do more in other areas of South Yorkshire, especially with the new ways of reaching and working with young people, developed over the last 12 months.

The Drop In Service is working more closely with Sheffield City Council: levels of understanding, trust and day-to-day joint case-working have increased over the last three to four years. But there is a sense of strategic and operational separation and data systems are still very separate. This separation is important, up to a point, in terms of the different roles and responsibilities of statutory and voluntary agencies. Any differences between a local authority and Roundabout should not hinder jointly addressing youth homelessness. We noted there was a gap in terms of a shared strategic framework and systems which enable deeper understanding of numbers, success rates, needs and outcomes. Plans for more integrated day-to-day working have been put on hold due to the Covid-19 pandemic. It may be timely to now think through the added value provided by



the Drop In Service success given the high rates of youth engagement and prevention success rates...and how this could be better aligned with the work of the Council to show the true extent of need and success rates in preventing and relieving youth homelessness.

Understanding the costs of homelessness and where to invest public money for maximum returns will be critical over the next few years. There is a risk that, within public services, the focus will continue to be on managing crisis, which is inevitably a high cost intervention. Balanced with this, however, needs to be investment into earlier prevention.

By using some national unit costings, and based on a deliberately conservative estimate of numbers and costs, if Roundabout had only assisted 5 young people aged 16 – 25 a year to avoid homelessness and stay at home or plan a move, the saving to a local authority would exceed £86,000 – more than the annual National Lottery funding.

We conclude by noting that youth homelessness is expected to rise in the future, the impact on young people's education and training as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the economic downturn, with higher levels of youth unemployment, and family poverty, combined with a challenging housing market, all point to rises generally in homelessness. Life will be difficult enough for young people in a post-Covid world, without homelessness being introduced into the equation.

Closer partnership working is more critical now than ever before. All the learning over the last decade or more points to deeper collaboration between agencies in order to effectively address youth homelessness.

Investment in prevention services cannot be thought of as an ideal optional or even superfluous element of youth homelessness strategies. It is an essential element which will support young people as they make the transition into being young adults – and reduce crisis-driven spending from the public purse at the same time.



Section 1: Introduction

1.1 Overview

Roundabout is a charity working with young people in South Yorkshire who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Established in Sheffield in 1977, the organisation now works with young people aged 16 – 25 across all 4 of the South Yorkshire local authority areas: Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield. At any given time, Roundabout supports approximately 250 young people by providing them with Roundabout supported accommodation or supporting them to live in their own accommodation.

Roundabout has increasingly focused on the prevention of homelessness, working more 'upstream' to reach young people and support families which might be at risk of experiencing homelessness in the future. In 2015, Roundabout applied for a five year 'Reaching Communities' grant from the National Lottery in order to focus on the prevention of homelessness amongst 16 – 25-year-olds. Using the national youth homelessness prevention 'Positive Pathway' model¹ to set out the strategic rationale for the bid, Roundabout's five-year funding from the National Lottery began in 2016.

The funding secured was to be used to deliver two complementary elements:

- Education work in schools and other educational environments using a peer-led model, through which young people with lived experiences of homelessness are trained and supported to deliver sessions about the realities of being homeless.
- An advice and assistance 'Drop In' Service for young people who may be at risk of homelessness, or who are already homeless, based in Sheffield city centre and open five days a week for 16 – 25-year-olds.

Roundabout agreed with the National Lottery a number of outcomes for the five years, against which evidence was collected in order to give funders and Roundabout as an organisation an indication of progress.

The purpose of this report is to consider whether or not the stated outcomes have been achieved, and to highlight the lessons learnt from the services delivered through the 'Reaching Communities' funding.

In order to understand the impact of the National Lottery funding, pinpoint the key learning, and make recommendations, an initial overview is required of young people in South Yorkshire and homelessness over the last five years. Important developments include some significant changes to homelessness legislation in April 2018 and, more recently, the adaption and development of services throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. The context is set out in Section 2, with some changes explored in greater detail later in the report.

The learning from the report aims to assist Roundabout and other agencies in service review, planning and delivery in the future. It may be of particular interest to:

- local authorities as providers and commissioners of services;
- Combined Authority areas;
- voluntary and community-based agencies;
- schools and colleges;
- housing associations.

¹ See Appendix One for outline of the Positive Pathway model.

1.2 Methodology

This report has been drafted using three main sources of information:

1. Relevant data and information sources:

- Data collected by the Homeless Prevention Service over the last four-and-a-half years, relating to the case-level work through the Drop In Service and the Peer Education Programme work in schools and colleges.
- Data available in the public domain relating to local and national statistics on homelessness.
- Other contextual data which can inform understanding of the drivers of youth homelessness.
- Relevant national and local strategy, policy and service delivery information.
- The original bid to Reaching Communities and annual reports submitted by Roundabout to the National Lottery outlining the work each year against the agreed outputs and outcomes.
- Youth homelessness prevention models from other areas of England.
- The 'Positive Pathway' youth homelessness prevention toolkits published by St Basils.²

2. Interviews and group discussions with key informants:

- Individual and small group interviews with Roundabout staff from the Homeless Prevention Service.
- Group discussions with young people who are trained as peer educators.
- Interviews with teachers in secondary schools.
- Interviews with officers within Sheffield City Council, from Children's Social Care and the Housing Solutions Services.

3. The homelessness journeys of 12 young people:

- Anonymous, case-level information of 12 young people who had accessed the Drop In Service.

The fieldwork for the report was undertaken in January and February 2021, during the Covid-19 pandemic and a period of national lockdown. All interviews and group discussions were therefore conducted through remote video communication. Due to the pressures they were under, school teaching staff and local authority social workers and housing officers had less time than usual to commit to meetings outside of their core duties. Despite this, interviews did take place with some external stakeholders, albeit a smaller number than originally envisaged.

1.3 Preventing youth homelessness and Roundabout's bid to the National Lottery

Roundabout made a conscious decision in 2015, when the organisation submitted a bid to the National Lottery, to work more upstream, setting out to secure funding from charities and trusts to channel into prevention work. Overall, the ambition of Roundabout in securing the National Lottery funding was to do more to prevent youth homelessness. This straightforward aspiration masks the complexity of individual, inter-personal, economic and housing factors which can come into play in understanding the causes of homelessness.

The dominant driver leading to homelessness is poverty, manifesting in the socio-economic disadvantages experienced by single people and families with children.³ It is generally understood that amongst single, teenage young people, homelessness is usually symptomatic rather than causal. That is to say that the underlying causes of homelessness are not about loss of a tenancy

² St Basils (2019). See here for the 3 different Positive Pathway documents: <https://stbasils.org.uk/about-us/the-positive-pathway/>

³ Fitzpatrick, S., Mackie, P., Wood, J., (July 2019) Homelessness Prevention in the UK, published by UK Collaborative Centre for Housing Evidence. See: <https://housingevidence.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Homelessness-Prevention-in-the-UK-Policy-Brief-July-2019-final.pdf>

or a job per se, but due to a range of individual and inter-personal factors⁴ which prevent young people from being able to stay in the family home or a care setting. For most 16 – 25-year-olds, adverse childhood and teenage experiences⁵ are causal features. However, for some young people in their early to mid-twenties, homelessness can be the result of more structural drivers related to the economy and the housing market: unemployment, in-work poverty, and the affordability of housing.

The Positive Pathway model or framework is promoted by the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) as the approach local authorities and their partners should use in reviewing and developing youth homelessness prevention services. It is based on a 'whole systems' approach, underpinned by partnership working and real examples of what works well in different areas. Consequentially, some local authority areas have some or all of the elements of the framework in place.⁶ The overall objective is to design housing and support pathways which positively support young people as they transition into being young adults. There are five elements of the Pathway:

- 1. Universal Prevention** – protective activity that encourages young people and families to plan housing options and seek advice before any risk of homelessness emerges.
- 2. Targeted Prevention** – early intervention with young people at higher risk of homelessness.
- 3. Crisis Prevention and Relief** – what happens when a young person is homeless or is at very high risk of becoming homeless.
- 4. Commissioned Accommodation and Support** – the range of options locally for young people to live in accommodation with some support as needed.
- 5. Sustainable Housing** – the longer-term options which enable young people to move on by entering and sustaining employment, education or training.

In effect, the Positive Pathway model provides an outline of a 'theory of change' in youth homelessness prevention. This provides local authorities and their partners with a strategic and practical basis upon which to improve their services. When local authorities and their partners undertake a 'map and gap' exercise using the model (as set out above and in a more visual format in Appendix One), it is generally the case that most of the resource and activity is concentrated at the point of crisis, and further resource is committed to assisting the young person with the resolution of that crisis. Unsurprisingly, the intervention work which aims to remedy a crisis of homelessness tends to be, in relative terms, far less cost-effective than the more universal and targeted upstream prevention. This will be outlined in more detail later in the report.

Partnership working underpins all elements of the Positive Pathway. There is not a single intervention which can prevent homelessness occurring amongst young people. In the absence of a 'silver bullet', comprehensive youth homelessness prevention services have a number of facets which together can address some of the complexities and offer individual young people and their families a bespoke response.

Roundabout has a number of other prevention services which sit alongside the Peer Education programme and the Drop In Service. Listed below are the other components which together make up Roundabout's Homeless Prevention Service and their current funding sources:

- **Mediation** work with young people and their families, funded by Children in Need (for 13 – 19-year-olds) and Sheffield City Council (for 16 – 21-year-olds). The Mediation Worker funded

4 Fitzpatrick, S., Pleace, N., Stephens, M., & Quilgars, D. (2009). Introduction: An overview of homelessness in the UK. In S. Fitzpatrick, D. Quilgars & N. Pleace (Eds.), *Homelessness in the UK: Problems and solutions*. Coventry: Chartered Institute of Housing.

5 For a policy summary and information on Adverse Childhood Experiences see: <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmsctech/506/50605.htm>

6 Green, S., McCarthy, L., Pattison, B. (April 2017) Sheffield Hallam University in 'The Positive Pathway Model: A Rapid Evaluation of Its Impact' noted that the majority of local authorities are familiar with the Positive Pathway tools/resources.



through the Council is, in effect, an integral part of the Drop In Service. Young people and their families are offered up to 12 sessions of mediation. A flexible model is used, underpinned by specialist training and external supervision.

- Assistance to **access private rented accommodation**, funded by the End Youth Homeless Alliance. Aiming for a minimum of 34 new tenancies a year, the Service works with young people who do not need supported housing, but require help to find their own accommodation. Most referrals are via the Drop In Service, though some are from other agencies across South Yorkshire.
- Assistance to access **employment, education and training**, funded by the End Youth Homeless Alliance. Staff offer practical support and advice to young people. Referrals are often through the Mediation Service, where engagement in ETE could relieve some of the pressure in a family home, or through the private rented scheme, where young people need employment to be able to afford rent.
- The **'Future Builder's Programme'**, which trains young people through apprenticeships in building trades, giving them experience in renovating properties. These properties provide low-rent accommodation for trainees upon completion and other young people at risk of homelessness who are in employment. The scheme is funded by OVO Energy. Currently there are three properties, with nine bedrooms on long-term lease from Sheffield City Council. Roundabout hopes to add two other properties to this portfolio.

Whilst this report covers in more detail the Peer Education Programme and the Drop In Service, the other services listed above each play a pivotal role in prevention work amongst young people and add significant options and value to the work funded through the Reaching Communities programme.

A mixture of internal and external drivers were evident in the bid to the National Lottery, which together informed the proposal:

- an organisational aspiration to end youth homelessness because of the poor life outcomes which young people are likely to experience as a result;
- a strategic resonance as an organisation with a national framework which promoted youth homelessness prevention – the 'Positive Pathway';
- over a year of piloting peer education work in schools and running the Drop In Service in Sheffield prior to making the bid;
- evidence from the then Department of Communities and Local Government that statutory homelessness and rough sleeping were both rising in England;
- evidence from a national research report⁷ that youth homelessness was a significant issue.

Set out within the bid were four outcomes and a number of metrics which would be used to measure the impact of activity against the outcomes. An independent longitudinal evaluation over the five years of funding was to be commissioned alongside the services to consistently measure progress and track the cases of a sample group over several years against a control group to find out about the possible return on investment in more preventative services. In the event, the longitudinal study was never commissioned for a range of operational reasons, not least the complexity of data-matching between statutory and voluntary sector systems. It was agreed that an evaluation report towards the end of the five years of funding would replace this longitudinal evaluation.

Four outcomes were proposed by Roundabout, with some accompanying measures or metrics over the lifetime of the five years of funding. This report examines the progress made towards achieving the overall outcomes, as well as the other learning from the two services – the Peer

⁷ Homeless Link, Young and Homeless 2014, see <https://www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-attachments/201411%20-%20Young%20and%20Homeless%20-%20Full%20Report.pdf>

Education Programme and the Drop In Service – with a focus on how they work with other services within the Homeless Prevention Service.

For the purposes of providing a clear, contextual overview, the outcomes are set out below as they appeared in the bid to the National Lottery. The 'Type of Outcome' column has been incorporated in order to assist with some understanding of the evidence base for each of the four outcomes, drawing on the Government-led learning from outcome-based contracts, Social Impact Bonds.

Outcome	Type of outcome ⁸	Metrics / Indicators	Level of output and when this would be achieved by
1. Young people report an increase in their awareness and understanding of homelessness and where to access support	A 'soft' outcome – based on an individuals' self-assessment.	Young people report increased awareness and understanding of homelessness	3000 young people by the end of the 5 years
		Young people report increased understanding of the causes of homelessness	3000 young people by the end of the 5 years
		Young people report increased knowledge of where to go for support	3000 young people by the end of the 5 years
2. Young People at risk are more resilient and better able to deal with family conflict, and therefore more likely to stay in the family home	A combined 'soft' and 'hard' outcome: achievement is measured by both a change in attitude/awareness following peer education work and then a reduction in youth homelessness.	Young people report that they would be more likely to stay in the family home as a result of our intervention	750 young people by the end of the 5 years
		Number of young people from participating schools/PRUs etc accessing Roundabout's emergency accommodation reduces over time	From 50 young people to 25 young people per year by the end of the 5 years
		Longitudinal study (including control group approach) shows reduction in homelessness for those involved in project aged 16 to 21	Reduces from 100 young people to 50 young people per year by the end of the project
3. Young people have improved knowledge and skills needed to access appropriate, planned accommodation, when needed	A 'hard' outcome – achievement is measured by the numbers retaining their current accommodation or moving to other accommodation.	Young people accessing the drop-in facility able to access secure accommodation	450 young people per year by the end of the project
4. Peer educators report an improvement in confidence, self-belief, social skills and capacity to integrate	A 'soft' outcome – evidence is mainly collected through individual self-assessment, with another output being achievement of a qualification.	Peer Educators report an improvement in their confidence and self-belief	50 peer educators by the end of the project
		Peer Educators report an improvement in their social skills and capacity to integrate	50 peer educators by the end of the project
		Peer Educators achieve BTEC Level 2 Award in Peer Education	20 peer educators by the end of the project

The Homeless Prevention Service Manager has overseen the delivery of the National Lottery-funded work, reporting within the organisation and leading the production of an annual report to be submitted to the National Lottery. Each annual report sets out the detail of the activity within the previous year.

⁸ Added in to highlight different types of outcomes and associated metrics, taken from the Government Outcomes Lab: <https://golab.bsg.ox.ac.uk/toolkit/technical-guidance/setting-measuring-outcomes/>

1.4 Young people and their housing needs – a changing picture

The proposed range and levels of outputs and the outcomes in the National Lottery bid were based on the landscape in 2015. The funding commenced in 2016 and, inevitably, a number of external factors – beyond the scope of Roundabout's sphere of control or influence – have emerged over time. As the political, legal, social and economic context within which Roundabout delivers its services changes continually, the challenge is to continue delivering these services, adapting as needed.

One of the most significant external factors, which was impossible to predict at any level, has been the Covid-19 pandemic. There is a high level of concern about young people and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on their immediate and long-term life chances. The shadow of the damage caused by the pandemic pervades over young people's futures. Lockdown measures introduced to manage infection and mortality rates have adversely impacted young people's education, training and employment experiences, as well as their emotional well-being.⁹ Combined, it is anticipated that these factors will damage the economic prospects of young people, and, in some cases, their mental health. Aspirations, plans, social lives, and relationships have all been put on hold for young people, as have exams, placements and jobs.

The pandemic is, and will continue to be of significance to local communities, the economy and young people. All of these aspects in turn will affect young people's housing options in the future.

The adaption of Roundabout's services throughout the pandemic will be discussed through the report.



⁹ See the ONS report: Corona virus and the social impact on young people in Great Britain, published in May/June 2020: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/ageing/articles/coronavirusandthesocialimpactsoneyoungpeopleingreatbritain/3aprilto10may2020#main-points>

Section 2: Young people's housing needs from 2015, through key statistics and policy change

2.1 Overview

The national and local datasets in this section have been selected to demonstrate, where possible, some of the changes which have taken place over the last five years across a range of domains which relate to young people and homelessness either directly or indirectly. This data, combined with some of the main policy changes associated with young people and housing, intends to give a sense of direction of travel in terms of the wider operating environment for Roundabout and, critically, the young people Roundabout aims to support.

The datasets below provide the sub-regional context. Roundabout provides some accommodation services in each of the four local authority areas. Whilst the focus of the activity relating to the National Lottery funding was predominantly in Sheffield, there was no funding restriction on working with young people from other areas. Some services were offered to schools and individual young people from other areas within the South Yorkshire Combined Authority area, which contains 4 local authority areas.

This report was drafted in March 2021. Where relevant data has been released over the last 12 months of the Covid-19 pandemic, it has been included. Some of this data, however, may need to be treated with some caution, due to the unprecedented circumstances over the last year, which have impacted data-collection and reporting as well as the data itself. Where this is the case it will be highlighted.

2.2 The population of young people in South Yorkshire

As the tables below demonstrate, there is some variation between the four local authority areas in South Yorkshire. As the third-largest local authority in England, Sheffield is a city with a large student population. Sheffield's estimated 60,000 students partially account for its much higher proportion of 16 – 24-year-olds in comparison to Doncaster, Barnsley and Rotherham.

Table 2: Percentage of population aged 16-25, taken from 2019 ONS mid-year population estimates

Area	England	Yorkshire & Humber Region	Barnsley	Doncaster	Rotherham	Sheffield
Percentage (and Number) of Population Aged 16-25	11.9% (6,694,161)	12.6% (695,852)	10.6% (26,059)	10.6% (32,950)	10.8% (28,791)	17.4% (101,573)

2.3 Young people and the economic context in South Yorkshire

The underlying levels of poverty and deprivation, as major drivers of homelessness, are a useful place to start in setting out the context for South Yorkshire and youth homelessness.

Table 3: The ranking of South Yorkshire local authorities according to the 2015 and 2019 Indices of Multiple

Local Authority District Name	2015 Indices of Multiple Deprivation – Rank of Average Rank from 326 Councils	2019 Indices of Multiple Deprivation – Rank of Average Rank from 317 Councils*
Barnsley	37	38
Doncaster	48	41
Rotherham	62	50
Sheffield	94	93

***Between 2015 and 2019 there was some re-organisation of local authorities, with some two-tier authorities becoming unitaries and some merging of some lower tier authorities. This reduced the overall number of local authorities by 9.**

Notably, Rotherham and Doncaster moved upward in relation to other local authorities between 2015 and 2019 Sheffield and Barnsley did change, but only by one place.

The Indices of Multiple Deprivation have been used to set out the overall levels of poverty in each area of South Yorkshire and are based on a scoring across a number of domains:

- Income Deprivation
- Employment Deprivation
- Education, Skills and Training Deprivation
- Health Deprivation and Disability
- Crime
- Barriers to Housing and Services
- Living Environment Deprivation

Arguably, the ranking of whole authorities can be a rather blunt instrument for those wishing to address poverty within local authorities. In order to understand in greater detail levels of deprivation within smaller areas of a local authority, Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) have been designed to improve reporting and assist with more targeted intervention and support. In 2019, there was a ranking exercise of the 34,753 LSOAs in England. The table below indicated the levels of poverty in some areas of the four South Yorkshire authorities.

Table 4: Rank of local authorities by the proportion of Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in the most deprived 10% nationally

Local Authority Name	2019 IMD Rank of the local authority by LSOA in the most deprived 10% nationally
Barnsley	35
Doncaster	32
Rotherham	36
Sheffield	30

The levels of unemployment in any area are a key indicator of deprivation. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, the levels of youth unemployment were already a concern nationally.

The Office of National Statistics reported in March 2021 that over the previous 12 months, 63% of all job losses were in the 16 – 24 age group.¹⁰ Across all areas of South Yorkshire, the number of young people claiming Universal Credit has risen sharply between December 2018 and December 2020 and it is reasonable to assume that this in no small part is attributable to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Table 5: Universal Credit Claimant Count by Age, taken from NOMIS Official Labour Market Statistics

Universal Credit Claimant Count by Age (Level and %)									
Area	16-17 Year Olds			18-24 Year Olds			Total population (all ages) aged 16 +		
	Dec 2016	Dec 2018	Dec 2020	Dec 2016	Dec 2018	Dec 2020	Dec 2016	Dec 2018	Dec 2020
Barnsley	0 (0%)	10 (0.2%)	20 (0.4%)	720 (3.7%)	995 (5.4%)	1,995 (11.1%)	3,215 (2.1%)	4,935 (3.2%)	9,240 (6.1%)
Doncaster	0 (0%)	25 (0.4%)	50 (0.8%)	1,175 (4.9%)	1,405 (6.2%)	2,840 (12.7%)	4,730 (2.5%)	6,495 (3.4%)	13,910 (7.2%)
Rotherham	5 (0.1%)	10 (0.2%)	20 (0.3%)	995 (4.9%)	970 (4.8%)	2,430 (12.4%)	4,115 (2.6%)	4,800 (3%)	11,375 (7%)
Sheffield	5 (0%)	0 (0%)	55 (0.5%)	1,900 (2.3%)	1,475 (1.8%)	4,880 (6.2%)	8,795 (2.3%)	7,825 (2%)	23,295 (6%)
Yorkshire & Humber Region	65 (0.1%)	255 (0.2%)	625 (0.5%)	16,170 (3.1%)	17,685 (3.5%)	45,205 (9%)	471,630 (2.1%)	89,510 (2.6%)	218,945 (6.4%)
England	530 (0.1%)	1,940 (0.2%)	3,950 (0.3%)	125,910 (2.6%)	146,575 (3.1%)	421,495 (8.9%)	600,915 (1.7%)	796,815 (2.3%)	2,216,785 (6.3%)

Note: % is number of claimants as a proportion of resident population of the same age.

10 See: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/uklabourmarket/march2021>

There is a steeper rise in unemployment in Rotherham, Barnsley and Doncaster for those aged 18 – 24 in comparison to Sheffield, although the starting position in 2018 was higher for all of these local authority areas when compared to Sheffield.

Most 16 and 17-year-olds are not eligible to claim Universal Credit, and there is a legal requirement for this age group to be in education or work-based training. A more accurate way to capture and represent the activity of this age group relating to entering the labour market combines education, training and employment status.

Table 6: 16–17-year-olds not in education, employment or training (NEET) or whose activity is not known, taken from Department for Education NEET and participation local authority figures

Area	Proportion of 16-17 Year Olds Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) or Whose Activity is Not Known								
	Total Number of NEET (Inc. Not Known)			Proportion NEET or Not Known			Of Which Known to be NEET		
	Dec 2016	Dec 2018	Dec 2020	Dec 2016	Dec 2018	Dec 2020	Dec 2016	Dec 2018	Dec 2020
Barnsley	260	240	200	5.6	4.9	4.1	3%	2.7%	2.4%
Doncaster	420	380	300	6.5	5.9	4.6	3.3%	3.3%	3.7%
Rotherham	360	340	350	5.9%	5.8%	5.7%	3.3%	3.3%	3.7%
Sheffield	690	680	760	6.1%	6.1%	6.7%	4.3%	3.6%	4.2%
Yorkshire & Humber Region	6,530	6,790	6,420	5.8%	6%	5.6%	3.1%	2.9%	2.9%
England	68,070	61,830	62,350	6%	5.5%	5.5%	2.7%	2.6%	2.7%

It would appear from the table above that NEET levels have remained stable over the last three years. The sharp increase seen in the number of 18 – 24-year-olds claiming Universal Credit in 2020 is not repeated for the 16/17-year-old group in terms of higher rates of NEET, which does vary between the four local authority areas but remains broadly the same.

At the time of writing this report, all Universal Credit claimants will continue to receive an additional £20 per week, until the end of September 2021, due to the hardships of the Covid-19 pandemic. For single Universal Credit claimants aged under 25, payments increased from £251.77 per month to £342.74 – a rise of £90.97. Those aged over 25 receive a higher amount based on their age alone; this age group saw an increase of £92.07 per month, from £317.82 to £409.89.

The Government has introduced the KickStart Scheme in response to the rising unemployment amongst young people due to the pandemic. Aimed at 16-25-year-old recipients of Universal Credit, this scheme offers to pay employers the national minimum wage for 25 hours of work per week for 6 months for every young person. In addition, the Government has funded 150 Youth Employability Coaches across the U.K. targeting those who face significant barriers to work, with help through mentoring and helping with access to training, work and apprenticeships.

2.4 Young people and the housing market in South Yorkshire

Young people are cited as being at significant disadvantage in the housing market¹¹: they generally earn less than older adults; they are less experienced at managing a tenancy and they are not entitled to the same level of welfare benefits as older adults. As a result of a combination of these factors, they face a further disadvantage – discrimination from some social and private landlords, who prefer older adults with more experience and more economic security. Many private landlords want a guarantor if they let properties to young people. For young people with no family support, this is not an option. They are therefore subject to a pervasive form of discrimination based on their age and one which, despite age being a protected characteristic under equalities legislation, remains legal.¹²

One of the main housing challenges for people on a low income is affordability, especially if the private rented sector is the most realistic option. Most young people who are on a low income and claiming welfare benefits would only be able to claim the Shared Accommodation Rate (SAR) for housing costs. Some young people are exempt from this, including care leavers under the age of 22.¹³

In the Spring budget of 2021, the Chancellor announced some changes to the Shared Accommodation Rate (SAR) exemption which will commence from June 2021. The SAR is the lowest amount of local housing allowance payable in any area, and is payable to single people under the aged of 35. It is intended to cover the cost of a room in a private rented shared house, based on the bottom third of any local housing market. Care leavers have an exemption from the SAR, and can claim the higher one-bed Local Housing Allowance rate, but only until their 22nd birthday under current law. Other young people who have been homeless and spent three months or more in 'resettlement' accommodation are also exempt, though this exemption only begins when they reach the age of 25. From June 2021, the SAR exemption will be extended for care leavers until their 25th birthday. Furthermore, young people who have spent three months or more in resettlement / supported housing will also have an exemption and can claim the higher one-bedroom rate once they move into settled accommodation, regardless of their age into settled accommodation, regardless of their age.

The table below sets out the local market rents and entitlements to housing benefits in the private rented sector.

Table 7: Lower quartile market rent and Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates for local authorities in South Yorkshire

Local Authority District Name	Lower Quartile Rent (Oct. 2019-Sep. 2020*)		Local Housing Allowance (2019/20)	
	Room (£)	One Bed (£)	Room (£)	One Bed (£)
Barnsley	325	364	252.33	315.99
Doncaster	280	350	239.51	339.28
Rotherham	325*	375	261.84	345.01
Sheffield	300	475	279.88	411.93

***Data for Rotherham in relation to the Lower Quartile Rent for a single room was unavailable in the latest PRS dataset (Oct.2019-Sep.2020). As such, this table displays the latest available data for this value, as provided by the previous Apr.2019-Mar.2020 dataset.**

11 Watts, B., Johnsen, S., & Sosenko, F. (2015) Youth homelessness in the UK: A review for The OVO Foundation, Available at: <https://pureapps2.hw.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/9258335>

12 See here for a recent court ruling on landlord discrimination: https://england.shelter.org.uk/media/press_release/no_dss_landmark_court_ruling_confirms_housing_benefit_discrimination_unlawful

13 See: <https://www.gov.uk/housing-and-universal-credit/renting-from-private-landlord>



Table 7 shows that across all 4 local authority areas, there is a gap between the lowest market rent and the amount of housing costs payable to young people, which young people would need to make up from their own incomes. The impact of the economic downturn on the overall housing market is as yet unknown. It is expected that there will be more office and retail premises available for conversion into flats, alongside changes to some elements of planning requirements (notably 'permitted developments'). This may make it easier for landlords and home owners to make changes without applying for permission from planning departments. These changes, which would bring new rental properties into the market, could drive down rental costs, but other features, such as landlords selling properties, could squeeze supply and push prices up. Local variation is a key factor as well.

Affordable housing, which is owned by Registered Providers of housing, has rent levels set at no more than 80% of the market rent and as a consequence it is more challenging for many young people on low incomes to access.

Access to social housing is limited in most areas unless young people have reasonable or additional preference, as set out in each local allocation scheme or policy. Waiting lists are often long, or closed to anyone without a housing need. Social housing is more affordable than most private rented accommodation, with rents set at no more than 60% of the local market rent and more secure in terms of tenure.

The overall social housing stock profile is different in every area. The number and proportion of one-bedroom social housing varies between local authority areas, but is generally in higher demand and lower supply than larger properties.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, turnover of stock has been reported as low, and there has been a prioritisation of finding social housing for those who have been accommodated through 'Everyone In' – the MHCLG-led programme helping rough sleepers off the streets during the first lockdown in 2020. This demand is almost entirely for one-bedroom housing. Both the slow-down of turnover and re-housing of people formerly sleeping rough have placed increased pressure on the already long waiting lists.

2.5 Homelessness and young people in South Yorkshire

When Roundabout applied to the National Lottery for funding in 2015, it was difficult to establish a realistic baseline position in terms of homelessness amongst young people. Unless local authorities had developed their own data-collection systems – which very few had done by 2015 – the available local and national data was limited.¹⁴

In 2015, the data on homelessness published by the then Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) was split into three areas:

- Statutory homelessness (published quarterly)
- Prevention and relief work, which was outside of the statutory framework (published quarterly)
- Rough sleeping – an annual snapshot in every local authority area, but not broken down by age until 2017

Statutory homelessness was rising in 2015 and had been doing so for several years, as had rough sleeping. Within the statutory homelessness datasets published by the Government every quarter, youth homelessness had reduced over time and, based on the published statistics,

¹⁴ This is based on St Basils Youth Homelessness Adviser work and DCLG Youth Homelessness Adviser work between 2008 and 2018.

was the most stable of all the different groups of homeless households. However, the data only included those young people who were assessed as having a 'priority need' for accommodation on the basis of being a homeless 16 or 17-year-old or being a care leaver aged 18 – 20. Young people and other adults who did not have a 'priority need' were not represented within these statistics.

Table 8: 2014/15 statutory homelessness acceptances of the 'main duty' for young people

Statutory homelessness 'acceptances' of the 'main duty' in 2014/15				
Local Authority	16/17 Year Olds	Care leavers aged 18-20	Total acceptances (all ages and groups)	Overall % of youth acceptances
Barnsley	-	-	-	-
Doncaster	1	1	177	1%
Rotherham	2	0	87	2%
Sheffield	1	4	363	1%
Yorkshire & Humber Region	124	40	3,228	5%
England	577	716	54,428	2%

Some young people may have received some advice from a local authority to help prevent their homelessness. Such advice may have been offered through mediation services, signposting to a local voluntary agency (such as Roundabout), or being supported with a rent deposit for a flat. Any prevention or relief of homelessness activity which took place outside of statutory homelessness ought to have been recorded on the non-statutory 'prevention and relief' statistics kept by local authorities, which were published alongside the statutory statistics. Young people, however, could not be identified through this recording system, as age was not recorded.

It is well documented that the primary driver of homelessness amongst under-25s is parental or wider family eviction, defined in the national recording system as parents or family being 'no longer willing or able to accommodate.'

Whilst various pieces of research have estimated the extent of youth homelessness, the magnitude of this remains difficult to gauge using a combination of statutory and non-statutory data and estimates of rough sleeping by age. Estimates have tended to include all under-25-year-olds owed a statutory duty, including a relatively large proportion of young parents with dependent children. Estimates for England, using a mixture of data, have ranged between 60,000 and 100,000¹⁵ per year.

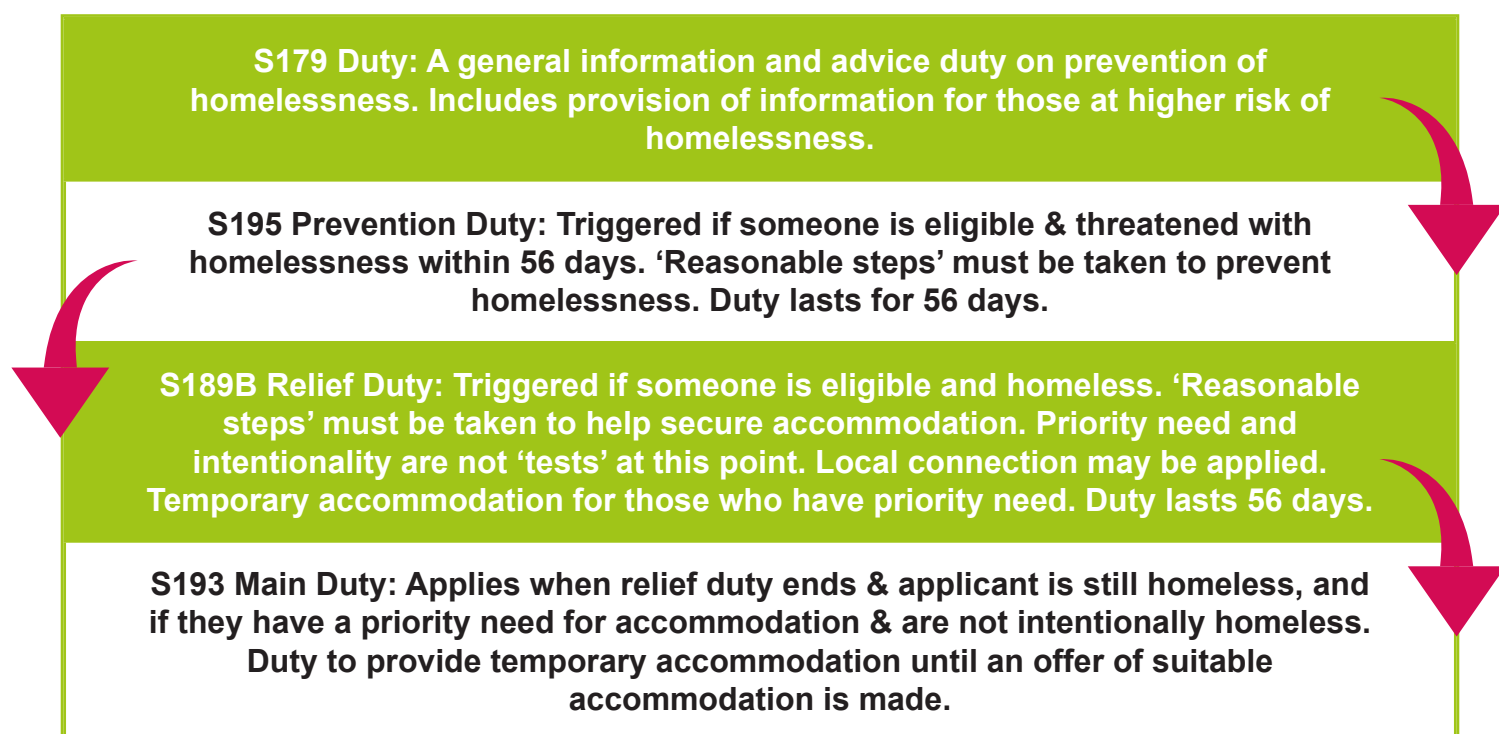
2.6 The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 – new duties and new national statistics

In 2018, nearly two years into Roundabout's National Lottery funding for the Peer Education Programme and the Drop In Service, homelessness legislation was fundamentally altered. Widely cited as the most significant change in homelessness legislation since 1977, the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 amended Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996. Alongside this, the recording system for statutory homelessness changed, providing more detailed, case-level information reported through to MHCLG via a system called 'H-CLIC'.

¹⁵ For examples see Centrepoint's 2020 report 'Caught in the Act' report, pages 7 – 13 : <https://centrepoint.org.uk/media/4203/1-caught-by-the-act-the-scale-of-youth-homelessness-in-the-uk.pdf>
Also see Watts, B., Johnsen, S., & Sosenko, F. (2015) Youth homelessness in the UK: A review for The OVO Foundation, pages 49 – 61. <https://pureapps2.hw.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/9258335>



Table 9: The 'flow' of Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017



One of the main aims of the legislation was to give more help to single people who did not have a priority need for accommodation. Another key aim was to make the prevention of homelessness more of a priority by giving it a statutory footing. It was projected that homelessness applications would rise by around 28%, and MHCLG committed 'new burdens' funding to local housing authorities to assist them in coping with the increased duties. It was also expected that by making homelessness prevention and relief assistance 'blind' to the tests of priority need and intentionality, everyone who was eligible should be able to get help, and get it earlier, causing the number of individuals owed the 'main' homelessness duty to reduce. This assumption has been realised, with the national statistics to date reflecting these early predictions.

Roundabout could not have foreseen the new legislation. The organisation had been awarded some of the funding to help young people at the Drop In Service because at this time, most single young people would not have been assisted with prevention of homelessness or with accommodation under the homelessness legislation, as they would not have had a 'priority need' for accommodation. From April 2018 onwards, however, many more people would be owed a statutory duty if they approached a council for assistance.

The data below should be treated with some caution, as the reporting requirements are relatively new and significantly different to what went before. It has taken time for some local authorities to adjust to the new reporting system, and the reporting from 2019/20 onwards is generally viewed as being more accurate than the data from 2018/19. At the time of writing this report, the statistics were still classed by the Government as 'experimental' but from the summer of 2021 they have been classed as the official national statistics.

Table 10: Number of households (per 1,000 of the population) owed a statutory homeless duty, including the year prior to the commencement of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

Area	Households accepted as homeless and with priority need*	Households Assessed as Threatened with Homelessness (per 1000)			Households Assessed as Homeless (per 1,000)	
		2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2018/19	2019/20
Barnsley	0.38	1.94	4.10	2.38	4.13	
Doncaster	2.66	4.29	4.29	7.10	8.95	
Rotherham	1.09	6.28	5.36	7.74	10.53	
Sheffield	1.99	3.65	2.94	8.13	10.77	
Yorkshire & Humber Region	1.67	6.20	6.87	5.01	5.96	
England	2.41	6.32	6.31	5.20	5.94	

*Note that this column reflects the position 12 months prior to the commencement of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

The table above shows the widely anticipated overall rise in the number of households who have been accepted as being owed a homelessness duty (including a 'prevention' duty) since April 2018. It should be noted that this rise is predominantly amongst single people, not families. Again, this was an explicit aim of the new legislation.

Table 11: Ages of the main applicant owed a prevention or relief duty, taken from the MHCLG Homelessness Statistics 2018/19 and 2019/20:

Local Authority	Age Groups			
	16-17 Year Olds		18-24 Year Olds	
	18/19	19/20	18/19	19/20
Barnsley	1.3% (6)	1.1% (10)	21.1% (99)	23.8% (215)
Doncaster	0.5% (8)	0.7% (13)	20.7% (308)	22.1% (387)
Rotherham	0.8% (12)	0.8% (15)	22.8% (257)	22.4% (402)
Sheffield	1.8% (52)	2% (66)	23.4% (668)	22.3% (746)
Yorkshire & Humber Region	2.3% (600)	2.1% (630)	22.7% (5,900)	22.2% (6,650)
England	1.1% (2,850)	1.1% (3,110)	20.3% (54,840)	20% (57,740)

The figures above should be treated with some caution, as they include parents under 25 as well as single young people. All eligible households with dependent children have a priority need for accommodation if they are homeless, and a significant proportion of overall family homelessness is within the under 25-year-olds group. Youth homelessness services are focussed primarily on single young people, rather than young families. This is partly because young people who are single do not have an automatic priority need for accommodation, unless they are aged 16 – 17 or are care leavers aged 18 – 20.

One of the key changes in the homelessness legislation was the introduction of a duty to assess the support needs of all applicants. The support needs relate specifically to the ability of the applicant to manage accommodation. MHCLG have set out a number of different categories of support needs within the casework recording systems that local authorities must use, including some relating specifically to young people. There is no duty to meet the support needs identified, but the support needed to secure and retain accommodation must be assessed. The way in which different local authorities record support needs does vary, which is likely to explain in part the notable variations in percentages in some categories.

Table 12: The assessed support needs which relate to young people, taken from MHCLG Homelessness Statistics 2019/20

Area	Assessed Support Needs (as % and a number of total support needs) 2019-2020				
	16-17 Year Olds	Young Person Aged 18-25 Requiring Support to Manage Independently	Care Leaver Aged 18-20	Care Leaver Aged 21+	Young Parent Requiring Support to Manage Independently
Barnsley	2.1% (13)	13.8% (86)	1.9% (12)	0.8% (5)	1.6% (10)
Doncaster	0.4% (14)	2.1% (70)	0.9% (31)	1% (32)	0.8% (26)
Rotherham	1.3% (14)	6.8% (71)	1.2% (12)	0.8% (8)	0.5% (5)
Sheffield	0.6% (67)	2.2% (249)	0.5% (60)	2% (223)	0.5% (55)
Mean of support needs across the 4 LAs	1.1%	6.2%	1.1%	1.2%	0.9%
Yorkshire & Humber Region	1.7% (640)	4.8% (1,840)	0.9% (330)	1.4% (540)	0.9% (350)
England	1.1% (3,130)	4% (11,480)	1.2% (3,370)	1.2% (3,590)	1.1% (2,780)

2.7 Young people and rough sleeping

There are some salutary lessons to be learnt from looking downstream, observing what went wrong, in cases where young people have found themselves not only homeless but also rough sleeping.

The number of people estimated to be rough sleeping on any given night rose sharply from 1,768 in 2010 to 4,751 by 2017.¹⁶ In the face of media attention on rough sleeping and widespread public concern, the Government introduced in 2018 a large new programme of financial support – the Rough Sleeping Initiative – making funding available to local authorities to reduce rough sleeping numbers. The Government subsequently made a manifesto commitment in 2019 to end rough sleeping by 2024.

The spotlight on ending rough sleeping has been maintained, especially throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, during which the MHCLG led the ‘Everyone In’ programme from March 2020 into the summer of 2020.

¹⁶ See Appendix Two for the snapshot data on rough sleeping in South Yorkshire authorities published by MHCLG

Within the Rough Sleeping Initiative and other Government-led work on rough sleeping, there has been little centrally targeted work on under-25s. One exception is the funding to some areas with high numbers of care leavers in unsuitable accommodation, led by the Department for Education. None of the four South Yorkshire local authorities are recipients of this funding.

Where rough sleeping amongst young people has been a local concern, some local authorities, usually larger cities, have opted to commit some of their rough sleeping funding from MHCLG to under-25-year-olds. In 2019, Sheffield City Council's 'Rapid Rehousing Pathway' funding proposal to MHCLG for rough sleepers included services specifically tailored to young people, to be delivered by Roundabout through an outreach team.

In terms of an evidence base which is available in the public domain, the Government's Annual Rough Sleeping figures provides 'snapshot' data. Although this methodology has been criticised recently¹⁷ for failing to reflect the true scale of the problem, it has been used consistently for over a decade, and draws on estimates and counts from all local authorities over a single night. Using the annual snapshot methodology, the proportion of people found to be rough sleeping who are under 26 years old has been relatively low nationally. The table set out in Appendix Two is included in this report to provide some overview of the low number of young people reported through the annual counts or estimates from 2015, when Roundabout submitted a bid to the National Lottery.

A recent report on young people and the 'Everyone In' programme, published by St Basils, indicated that 15% of those offered assistance were aged 16 – 25, building on the relatively limited understanding of young people and their journeys in and out of rough sleeping. This report re-confirmed the findings of research which has been conducted into rough sleeping and other forms of severe and multiple exclusion, providing evidence of a strong link to adverse childhood experiences.¹⁸ A collaborative piece of work on young people and rough sleeping in London was published in August 2020,¹⁹ providing insights into one region, with some read-across to other areas.

The findings in these reports are relevant to work on targeted prevention with young people, because they identify the characteristics and circumstances associated with young people who are at a higher risk of rough sleeping than their counterparts. These include:

- The first episode of homelessness occurring at a young age
- Sexual exploitation at a young age
- Substance misuse
- Being a care leaver
- Involvement in offending behaviour and serving custodial sentences
- Repeat homelessness before the first occurrence of rough sleeping

2.8 Preventing youth homelessness beyond the Covid-19 pandemic

It is widely expected by local authorities and youth homelessness agencies that numbers of young people at risk of homelessness will rise in the next year or so. This is in part due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on young people's economic circumstances, as well as pressures in low income families with teenagers. Given that the publishing of the national homelessness statistics lags behind by at least three months, at the time of writing this report the most recent data available for 2020/21 is from the summer (July – September 2020). Due to the current national suspension of evictions, homelessness data over the pandemic is noticeably different and cannot

17 The Public Accounts Committee, (March 2021) See here: <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5801/cmselect/cmpubacc/934/93405.htm>

18 See page 4 in Fitzpatrick et al., (2011) Heriot-Watt University, Multiple exclusion homelessness across the UK: A quantitative survey, in Tackling homelessness and exclusion: Understanding complex lives: https://www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-attachments/Roundup_2715_Homelessness_aw.pdf

19 Report from the Young People Sleeping Rough Sub Group, August 2020, Life Off the Streets Taskforce, August 2020: <https://nhyouthcentre.org.uk/news/2020/08/19/young-people-sleeping-rough-sub-group-report>

be relied upon to signal any direction in travel for the future. There will be a large backlog of possession notices being processed by the courts, and the impact of lockdown on homelessness due to the ending of assured shorthold tenancies remains as yet unclear. Combined with rising unemployment, particularly amongst young people, there has never been a stronger case for a focus on preventing homelessness amongst 16 – 25 year-olds.



Section 3: Peer Education work

“The whole reason we do it is to give young people the experience we didn’t have.”

Peer Educator

3.1 Overview

The peer education work which Roundabout has delivered through the National Lottery is set within the first ‘element’ of the Positive Pathway model (see Appendix One). This is the ‘universal space’, described in the Positive Pathway document as:

“Timely, accurate information and advice about housing options available to everyone, delivered in a range of ways including web-based information and through schools to reach young people, families and professionals. This activity will usually be led by local authorities, in partnership with others.”²⁰

In most areas of England, there is a dearth of clear and easily comprehensible local information about housing and homelessness for young people.²¹ Young people who have experienced homelessness themselves have consistently raised this issue at a national level. The national ‘Youth Homeless Parliament’ event, hosted by the Government Minister responsible for homelessness, gives homeless young people a platform for sharing their views and influencing policy making.²² Since these events started in 2013, young people from across England – including some young people from Roundabout – have advocated strongly for more advice and information to be made readily available to young people. The consensus established over seven years is that work in schools would have helped many of them deal with difficulties in the family home differently, and would possibly have rendered them more willing to try and resolve difficulties with their families. For others, who could not have remained where they were, support in schools would have informed them of where to go for early advice if they faced a threat of homelessness.

Young people and some youth housing charities have made the point that schools provide teaching and information on all sorts of other non-academic matters, including relationships, avoiding pregnancy, safer sex, and substance misuse, yet housing and homelessness are not covered in any part of the National Curriculum. Information is gleaned from family and friends, some of which is not accurate or up to date. Some young people look at national websites, but these do not always help with understanding the range of available local services and where to go. By training and supporting young people with lived experience of homelessness to be peer educators, and offering structured sessions within the Personal, Health, Social and Economic education (PSHE) part of the National Curriculum, Roundabout aimed to address a gap in information and advice in Sheffield. This was not a new venture for them, as the organisation had already committed some of its own resources to pilot peer education work for a year prior to submitting an application for funding to the National Lottery.

There are very few other examples to compare Roundabout’s work to, as few local areas have a comprehensive peer education model in place. One comparable example is Broxtowe Youth Homeless, an organisation in a district area of Nottinghamshire, where peer education work has been delivered for over 12 years. Where relevant through this section of the report, reference will be made to the experience and learning from Broxtowe Youth Homeless.

20 From the Positive Pathway framework, 2019 (St Basils): <https://stbasils.org.uk/about-us/the-positive-pathway/>

21 See page 83 – 87 of Watts, B., Johnsen, S., & Sosenko, F. (2015) Youth homelessness in the UK: A review for The OVO Foundation, Available at: <https://pureapps2.hw.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/9258335>

22 See the Youth Homeless Parliament 2019 report here: <https://stbasils.org.uk/news/2019-youth-homeless-parliament-report-launched/>

Table 13: The ‘Reaching Communities’ National Lottery metrics and targets specifically relating to the young people who were the recipients of the peer education work

Outcome 1: Young people report an increase in their awareness and understanding of homelessness and where to access support	A ‘soft’ outcome – based on individual’s self-assessment	Young people report increased awareness and understanding of homelessness	3000 young people by the end of the 5 years
		Young people report increased understanding of the causes of homelessness	3000 young people by the end of the 5 years
		Young people report increased knowledge of where to go for support	3000 young people by the end of the 5 years
Outcome 2: Young People at risk are more resilient and better able to deal with family conflict, and therefore more likely to stay in the family home.	A ‘hard’ outcome – achievement is measured by a change in attitude/awareness following peer education work (a ‘softer’ metric) and a reduction in youth homelessness	Young people report that they would be more likely to stay in the family home as a result of our intervention	750 young people by the end of the 5 years
		Number of young people from participating schools/PRU’s etc accessing Roundabout’s emergency accommodation reduces over time	From 50 young people to 25 young people per year by the end of the 5 years

The progress made towards these outcomes, as well as the associated challenges and other learning, will be explored in this section. Another outcome and associated metrics and targets specifically relating to the young people who are peer educators will be covered later in this section.

Almost all of the metrics set out against each of the outcomes relate to changes in individuals – their self-awareness, knowledge and confidence. Similar ‘soft’ outcomes and measures are also used by the Broxtowe Youth Homelessness peer education project. The challenges associated with securing funding for upstream prevention work, relating to the difficulty of evidencing an impact directly on youth homelessness reductions, will be discussed later in this section.

3.2 The legal duty to provide advice and information on homelessness

The provision of advice and information is a legal requirement in any local authority area. Local authorities have a duty to provide advice and information on preventing homelessness.²³ Chapter Three of the Homelessness Code of Guidance²⁴ sets out detailed information on what is expected in terms of meeting the duty. This covers the need to target or adapt information for different groups of people and its importance at a strategic level:

“The provision of up to date, comprehensive, tailored advice and information will play an important part in delivering the housing authority’s strategy for preventing homelessness....

.... housing authorities must design advice and information services to meet the needs of people within their district including, in particular, the needs of the following groups:

23 See S179 of the Housing Act 1996

24 See: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-code-of-guidance-for-local-authorities/chapter-3-advice-and-information-about-homelessness-and-the-prevention-of-homelessness>

- (a) people released from prison or youth detention accommodation;
- (b) care leavers;
- (c) former members of the regular armed forces;
- (d) victims of domestic abuse;
- (e) people leaving hospital;
- (f) people suffering from a mental illness or impairment; and,
- (g) any other group that the authority identify as being at particular risk of homelessness in their district.”

There is a strong case for earlier, targeted information and advice to young people. As set out in point 2.6, in all four local authority areas in South Yorkshire approximately 25% of all prevention and relief duties were owed to young people aged under 25 in 2019/20. The particular disadvantage faced by these young people in accessing housing – their lower incomes, lack of experience as young tenants, and the landlord concerns about renting to young people – place them at a higher risk merely by virtue of their age.

The Homelessness Code of Guidance also sets out the type of advice and information that should be available. This covers:

- preventing homelessness;
- securing accommodation when homeless;
- the rights of people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, and the duties of the authority;
- any help that is available from the authority or anyone else for people in the authority’s district who are homeless or may become homeless (whether or not they are threatened with homelessness);
- how to access that help.

Most local authorities meet their duty to provide advice and information in several ways, including basic information on their websites. Advice should be provided over email, telephone or face-to-face if requested, although how effectively this prevents a later episode of homelessness, or indeed how helpful this is in general, is not well understood.

Local authorities have received significant amounts of funding over the last four years to support their work implementing the new homelessness legislation, and have been encouraged by the Homelessness Directorate in MHCLG to invest some of this into upstream, primary prevention. However, in most areas, the investment has been made in order to deal with an imminent threat of homelessness, or actual homelessness. Most of the funding is committed to dealing with crises and as a result, most of the focus is on crisis, which arguably rather defeats the key purpose of the legislation change - more emphasis on prevention.

There has been a significant uplift in homelessness funding to local authorities in England since 2017, at which time a new ring-fenced payment – the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant – replaced a previous funding stream which paid for temporary accommodation. In addition, the ‘new burdens’ funding started in the same year for an initial two years. All local authorities have experienced a significant increase in their funding for homelessness prevention work, including the four South Yorkshire authorities, in recognition of the increases in statutory duties and the ambition to prevent more homelessness.

There is no hard evidence available regarding the number of local authorities which have opted to invest some of their homelessness prevention funding from MHCLG into youth-focussed advice and information in the ‘universal space’. One example is the peer education work delivered by Broxtowe Youth Homeless, which is funded through Broxtowe District Council’s Homelessness Prevention grant from MHCLG and has been for several years. Other Districts in Nottinghamshire are now funding the service through their MHCLG funding to deliver work in schools in their areas.

Through the education system, there is no requirement to cover housing or homelessness within the national curriculum. Schools are now required to teach students about relationships, sexual relationships and health. This does not apply in the same way to maintained and academy schools, which are required to teach a broad but unspecified curriculum. From September 2020, all aspects of PSHE are compulsory in all state schools.²⁵

Schools are also required to cover the economic wellbeing and careers aspects of young people’s lives, for example by teaching about financial planning and problem solving through Maths and Citizenship. Whilst this may not appear to be directly related to homelessness, the affordability of accommodation and the cost of independent living are aspects which can be covered through this part of the curriculum and would support young people in their knowledge of housing options in the future.

3.3 The model of delivery

There are several different ways that information can be communicated to young people on housing and homelessness in the ‘universal space’. These include:

- Pages of information and advice on local authority or local voluntary agency websites;
- Theatre groups performing plays with a youth homelessness message to large groups of young people;
- Educational resource packs, often including DVD’s/online films, sent to teachers, youth workers and other professionals who work with young people;
- Local authorities and/or voluntary agencies working directly with young people in schools, colleges and other youth settings.

There is nothing to prevent a local authority area from having several of the above in place; it is reasonable to assume that utilising more communication channels would have greater reach and could achieve a greater impact. This is true both in terms of the numbers reached and the repetition of key messages relating to homelessness prevention at different stages as young people become adults.

25 See: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/908013/Relationships_Education__Relationships_and_Sex_Education__RSE__and_Health_Education.pdf

The model that Roundabout have deployed to fill the gap in information is delivered through reaching young people directly within youth settings – predominantly through schools and colleges. In schools, the sessions almost always fit into the PSHE part of the National Curriculum.

Roundabout offer sessions across a wide age span within school settings, from Year 8 to Year 13. Whilst schools vary, most tend to ask for sessions with Years 8 and 9. This may be because Years 10 and 11 are more focussed on exams, and it suits schools to have sessions with younger year groups of students. The optimum age in terms of students being most receptive to messages is not entirely understood, as there is no strong evidence base. However, most practitioners and young people advise that the older groups of students – Years 11, 12 and 13 – are likely to be more receptive, because leaving home is no longer for them a possibility confined to the distant future, but rather something within the realms of what might happen in the near future. This is the age group which is most in need of up to date information and advice.

The school sessions focus on:

- raising students' awareness of the realities of leaving home in an unplanned way at a young age;
- providing information about where to go for help if they need it;
- dispelling myths, making students aware that homelessness can happen to anyone;
- expectation management about housing choices if young people leave home at a young age

Young people who have lived experience of homelessness are put forward by their support workers and invited to consider training to become a peer educator. Further detail on the recruiting, training and supporting of peer educators is provided later in this section.

The sessions, which are always attended by the Peer Education Worker and at least one peer educator, take place almost entirely with class groups. Whilst it is possible to deliver the work in an assembly setting – an arrangement which would arguably be more time efficient – Roundabout has found that this approach results in very little traction with students:

“You get almost entirely zero engagement from these [assemblies] compared to a class room environment.” Roundabout's Peer Education Worker.

The sessions in classroom settings challenge the stereotypical view of the profile of a homeless person, aiming to send the message that homelessness can happen to anyone, including young people.

Practical, local information is introduced at various points and in accessible formats during the sessions. Young people are all given a keyring with Roundabout's contact details on. The issue of affordability is explored, to make students aware of how difficult managing alone financially would be. They are also told about and shown photos of Roundabout's 'Drop In' building in the city centre, and how to get there.

Peer educators talk about their own experience of using the Drop In Service, in order to give students an insight into their own experience.



The Mediation Service is introduced to students through talking about the main reason for youth homelessness, which is family breakdown. The role of mediation is simply set out and photos of the Mediation Workers are shared to de-mystify the Service. In some schools, the Mediation Service has had a regular presence and where this is the case, this is also shared with students. The sessions, which typically last between 45 and 60 minutes, end with one of the peer educators sharing their story with the class – what happened to them, why it happened, how they coped, and the impact it has had on them.

As noted earlier, Roundabout had already piloted peer education work in schools for over a year before the National Lottery funding commenced in July 2016, so they had a platform upon which to build, not least through the existing relationships with around 14 of the 27 secondary schools in Sheffield.

3.4 Peer Educators: Recruitment, training and support to progress towards education, training and employment

The outcomes and targets were an integral part of the proposal for the Peer Education Programme and its delivery.

Table 14: Outcomes and metrics relating to the Peer Educators

Outcome 4. Peer educators report an improvement in confidence, self-belief, social skills and capacity to integrate	Peer Educators report an improvement in their confidence and self-belief	50 peer educators by the end of the project
	Peer Educators report an improvement in their social skills and capacity to integrate	50 peer educators by the end of the project
	Peer Educators achieve BTEC Level 2 Award in Peer Education	20 young people by the end of the project

Every year, the Peer Education Programme has recruited and trained between 10 and 15 young people. The target to recruit and train 50 peer educators by the end of the Programme has been met, despite the Covid-19 pandemic, with 53 young people having been recruited and trained since July 2016.

Of the new peer educators recruited each year, the Peer Education Worker noted that between 5 and 10 will be part of the core team of peer educators, whilst others may ‘dip in and out’ according to their circumstances.

Most of the young people are known to Roundabout, but recruitment has been opened out to young people working with other agencies in Sheffield, widening the pool of young people. This is similar to the Broxtowe Youth Homeless peer education work, ‘Home Street Home’, which offers the opportunity to young people living in supported housing in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, as well as the young people who access the Broxtowe Youth Homeless ‘Drop In’ advice service.

Roundabout’s Peer Education Worker runs a four-session training course, which has changed slightly over the last four years, to increase the focus on professional boundaries and

safeguarding. The learning from the training is that a group of around 10 young people is the ideal number as they tend to bond more as a team. This is based on the experience of running much smaller groups as well as larger ones. It is also more time efficient for the service.

After completion, the peer educators are introduced at their own pace into co-delivering sessions as part of the team of peer educators.

Through being peer educators, young people are offered the option of working towards a Level 2 qualification. This is also the case in the Broxtowe Youth Homeless peer education service, which offers a Level 2 qualification in Personal and Social Development Skills. When the National Lottery funding began, Roundabout offered a BTEC Level 2 Award to peer educators, but the external accreditation was discontinued by the awarding body. The Peer Education Worker has since sourced another Level 2 qualification – Further Learning and Employment – through Open Awards,²⁶ because it supports the aspirations and plans of many of the peer educators.

There is a target for 20 young people to achieve a Level 2 qualification by the end of the five years. To date, that total is running at 18 young people. The accumulation rate of this total has understandably slowed down over the last 12 months, as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.



Behind the numbers and the training, it is important to remember that there are real young people. Through a group interview with five young people, a rich seam of evidence for this report was obtained.

All young people have a unique journey into homelessness, and have experienced first-hand the negative impacts of enduring homelessness at a young age at a point when they should have been on a positive journey into young adulthood.

This type of voluntary work takes a great deal of commitment, including attending training. When asked what motivates young people with lived experience to take the time to get involved, there were a mix of answers following two themes: making a difference and acquiring volunteering experience. All of the young people cited wanting to help others and give something back:

“I wanted to raise awareness – young people aren’t taught properly about independent living skills you need when you leave home and what can happen.” CH, a Peer Educator

“My main reason was all the help I had had from Roundabout previously – it made me realise what line of work I wanted to go in to.” SH, a Peer Educator

“Because of the experience of being in the system aged 16 – I came out to my parents and they kicked me out ...so I could tell my story and pass on my help and guidance and

26 See: <https://openawards.org.uk/umbraco/Surface/PdfContent/GetQualificationDocumentPdf/126744>

where to go for help. Homelessness for young people does not discriminate, whatever background you are – it can happen to anyone.” SK, a Peer Educator

Alongside a strong sense of wanting to make a difference, young people also talked about the benefits for them in terms of their own futures:

“I wanted to work in youth offending teams anyway and it’s a good platform to get experience in that – being able to engage and give some strong experience...getting employment skills as well as helping Roundabout. Being able to stand in front of a class, a group of people and talk – it’s been helpful...” SB, a peer educator

“I wanted to work for Roundabout as a support worker or to train to be a teacher and now I want to further my career to be either.” SK, a peer educator

Some young people also take part in order to build their confidence up and get a sense of a routine in their lives as well:

“At the time the main thing I wanted was to communicate with people again as I had a long time isolated from people and I wanted the experience. I did it for a mix of selfish reasons to get experience as well.” SH, a peer educator

“I needed a recent reference and it has helped me. I really have missed it over lockdown. My calendar was full – with peer education sessions all the time.” CH, a peer educator

The role of the peer educator takes centre stage in the delivery of the sessions, but in order for peer educators to perform their roles successfully, and for this to be a catalyst in their paths into education, training and employment, someone needs to direct and lead the work. There is a great deal of skill involved behind the scenes in recruiting, training, and then supporting peer educators.

The specific combination of skills, values, knowledge and experience required mean that this role is not always an easy one to fill. Roundabout has had two different Peer Education Workers over the last six years, and both have undertaken their work to an exemplary level. This is evident in the feedback from young people themselves and the schools, as well as the way the Programme has been established and developed.

During the group interview, young people reflected continually on the Peer Education Worker and his role in the Programme:

“I want people to know how peer education does really help people. From being rock bottom to be the best they can be for so long – but without Sheraz, it would not be possible. Roundabout have chosen the best people to work as the lead in this.” SH, a peer educator

“If it was not for Sheraz [the Peer Education Worker] it would not be as good as it is. You’ve got to have a good leader to lead a team.” SK, a peer educator

The young people also noted how, at times, the Peer Education Worker would re-focus young people:

“We are all human, and Sheraz puts us back on the ground – reminds us when we need it – we are professional, we are there to do a job and raise the awareness that we need to.” SH, a peer educator

One of the unspoken but important aspects of the role has been to encourage and promote teamwork and team support between young people:

“... it’s us as a team that do it, because we work so well together.” KE, a peer educator

“...I didn’t know anyone... I believe that the group of peer educators we have, we keep in contact and check with each other to make sure we are OK and are on the same wavelength and feel OK.” SB, a peer educator

The journey that the young people have been on since becoming peer educators and being a part of the team is significant. We asked them to look back and talk about their lives before they became peer educators, using a 0 – 10 scoring to talk about where they felt they were, in terms of their:

- Confidence levels;
- Sense of belief in themselves;
- Inter-personal skills;
- Sense of being part of society.

“I’d just been kicked out my dad’s and I was covered in bruises... [I was] a 1 or a 1.5 – I felt, I’m worthless, I’m not good enough.” SK, a peer educator

“I had absolutely no self-belief – zero – I had been in prison for a bit and moved to Sheffield in an emergency – so at that point – I didn’t expect anything to change.” SB, a peer educator

“I was a 1 or a 2 – I was feeling a bit broken, it was really hard at that time.” CH, a peer educator

“They [inter-personal skills] were around an 8 or 9 but just because you have good social skills... it was about trying to use that around other means.” SB, a peer educator

“[inter-personal skills]... a zero but sometimes a 3 or a 4 – I would have a conversation if I had to and would avoid it if I could, I’d just try to look awkward to avoid a conversation .” CH, a peer educator

“I felt part of things – I knew the Roundabout prevention team – so I was an 8 or 9, as I felt part of the dysfunctional family unit. I was part of the wider Roundabout family.” SK, a peer educator

“I was at absolutely zero, I was just out of prison, I felt like someone who did not fit in at all to society and it was only through meeting Sheraz – Sheraz offered me a volunteering opportunity but he left it kind of there for me as an idea – and said I had to go back to him. So I went back to him and he lined me up and that set me on a career path.” SB, a peer educator

We then asked them to talk about the same areas of their lives: confidence; self-belief; interpersonal skills and sense of place in society, again using the 0 – 10 scoring as a way to help think and talk about any changes since becoming a peer educator:

“I’m more confident in everyday life, it’s helped me in school work and group presentations – I was a lot more OK with it and not as nervous and just talking to people was just easier.”

KE, a peer educator



The experience has helped some young people develop resilience :

“...my confidence can be rocketed to an 8 or 9. Career-wise, if I go into support work it’s an 8 or 9 but, if I go into something I have never done, it would be much lower. It has definitely improved though – to believe in myself. I think more quickly about sorting out problems instead of sitting and feeling sorry myself, I’m able to get up and work out how to fix things if they go awry – I’ve got more of a positive approach.” SH, a peer educator

“It’s built me up and make me stronger as a person.” SK, a peer educator

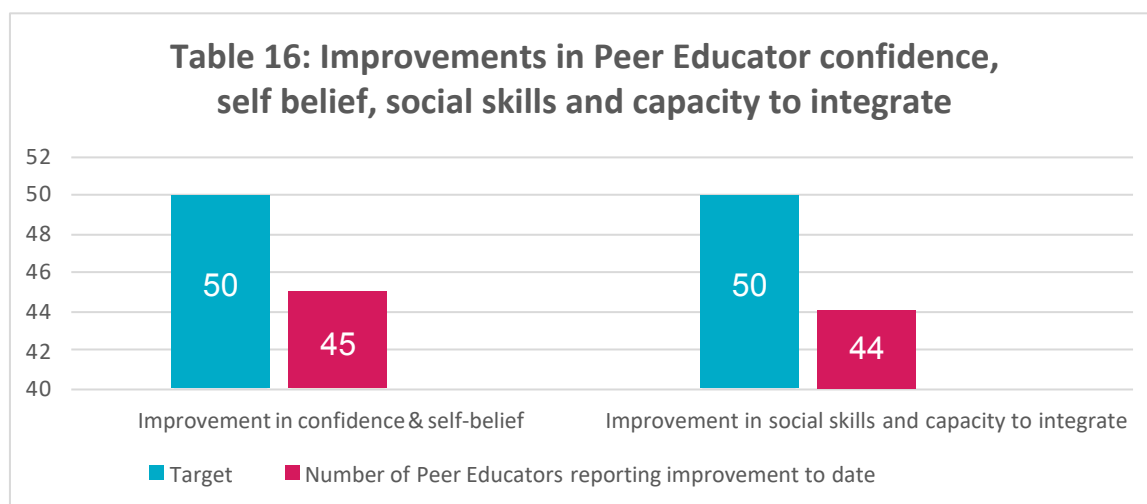
“Communication skills was one of my biggest issues – standing up in front of crowds, but going into peer education, it’s opened doors. Talking to researchers... job interviews. It doesn’t just give you confidence in schools, it gives you confidence in everyday life.” SH, a peer educator

“Basically doing peer education has built up my confidence and made me a more rounded person. I’m not so much up in people’s faces – I’ve got better interpersonal skills and independence.” SK, a peer educator

“I think peer education has been a step in helping me, in terms of – if I can go into schools and stand in front of classes and do that, then when I had to re-do a year in my college – I thought that if I can do that, then I’ll be good enough in my own school work.” KE, a peer educator

The net effect of becoming a peer educator is hard to put a precise value on or measure. All of the training, being part of a team, co-delivering sessions, having a sense of purpose – of making an important contribution – and getting support from the Peer Education Worker and other young people have all made a difference to individual young people who have experienced homelessness themselves.

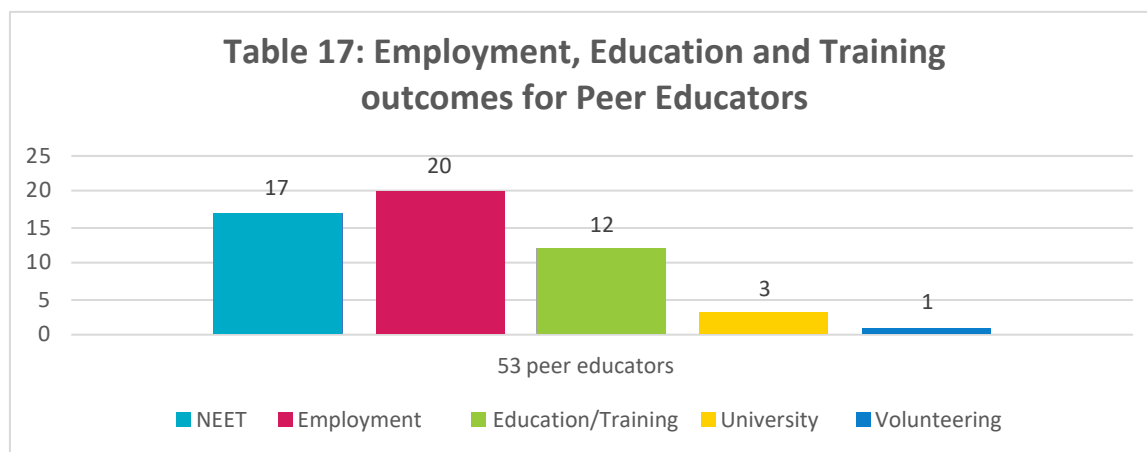
The monitoring from the Peer Education Programme over the four-and-a-half years offers numerical data. Whilst important, this perhaps distracts from the profound impact the Programme has had on some of the peer educators which is revealed through the qualitative data presented above. The language the interviewees used to express where they were and where they believe they are now is revealing and shows the journey they have been on, which has involved change and self-discovery. They go from being “rock bottom”, “broken”, “zero” and “isolated”, to expressing themselves now through words such as “confidence”, “independence”, “improved”, “realise”, “professional”, “career”, “fix things” and “positive”.



At the point of writing this report, there are six peer educators in the process of being trained. They have not been able to go into schools due to the Covid-19 pandemic, so any changes in their self-confidence or progression towards the original targets set are not yet added in to the table above.

The discussion group with peer educators highlighted the impact which the Peer Education Programme has had on some young people’s lives. The young people we spoke to have experienced their involvement as a catalyst for positive change. For many of these young people, with the support of the Peer Education Worker and each other, the programme has been a significant factor in their own journey away from homelessness into more positive experiences as young adults, including employment, education and training.

The human value of the experience is what is most important, in terms of contributing to emotional well-being, confidence and happiness. However, the programme also offers some fiscal and economic benefit to society as well, which may be significant. Whilst it is not possible to determine what can be attributed to the work of the Peer Education Programme, as this is not a longitudinal study, it is likely that for some of the young people the programme has been a key factor. 68% of the young people who are, or have been, peer educators are in employment, education or training, and many of these will be paying tax now or in the near future, rather than being reliant on claiming benefits.



3.5 Engaging with schools and other youth provision

Many local authorities and voluntary agencies report anecdotally that it is hard to engage with schools, particularly since many are now academies and these are run independently of the local authority.²⁷ There is, of course, a strong focus on academic achievement, and securing any space on the curriculum can be challenging.

Roundabout had already had over a year of running the Peer Education Programme in schools before the National Lottery funding started, albeit on a smaller scale, so there was some engagement from a number of secondary schools in Sheffield. It would appear that the schools in Sheffield which have had the Peer Education programme (some of them over at least five years), continue to invite Roundabout to deliver sessions. There has been a slight increase over four years of National Lottery funding in terms of new schools from the Sheffield area inviting Roundabout to deliver their programme. Out of the 27 schools, including academies, the Peer Education Programme has worked with 20, as well as Sheffield College.

Like the Broxtowe Youth Homeless peer education work, Roundabout has found that some schools do not respond to the offers, which are made by email in the main. There is not one stand-alone reason why this might be the case – leadership, changes in personnel running PSHE, emails not being forwarded from reception/administrative staff to the PSHE lead teachers, external pressures, especially poor Ofsted judgments, and recent academisation have all been cited as obstacles to getting through the doors of schools. Colleges tend to be more straightforward, as there is a pastoral team that can be approached more directly.

More recently, there has been take up with five secondary schools in Rotherham, but the sessions which were booked-in could not be delivered due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

When asked why schools had opted for Roundabout to deliver regularly within the PSHE part of the curriculum, teachers interviewed noted that the offer to schools was flexible and very easy for them to accommodate:

“Roundabout are simple to work with...a lot of agencies want access to speak to pupils on PSHE sessions. But they want all kinds of things setting up and pages of objectives and help with evaluations and so on – and make it complicated for us to have them in. So we don’t invite them”. A Faculty Leader for Life and Well-Being

27 Academy schools do not have to follow the National Curriculum, including PSHE and also based on feedback to the author of the report from her work across England with local authorities and voluntary agencies.

The same teacher also noted the delivery was appropriate, in terms of the students' learning needs:

"The sessions are spot on with a balance of group work, resources are appropriate to their ability, as some kids have a low reading age. They are conscious of little things – like some of the kids' answers, and are very positive regardless of what they say."

Teachers also noted high levels of engagement in the sessions on students, which increases the likelihood of continuing to invite Roundabout into schools.

"With Roundabout, you never have any of the young people messing about, it's the one session where you feel you could hide in cupboard and the kids would be perfectly behaved and when the young people read out their stories out at the end you can hear a pin drop. It's very real, it's very live when they read out the stories out at the end – it's the realisation." PSHE teacher and Head of Year 8

Housing insecurity is a feature that staff were conscious of:

"School staff are aware of a lot of issues for students. A lot of students are at risk of living in homes other than their own, they are moving out. We have students where home is chaotic and some are sofa-surfing." A Faculty Leader for Life and Well-Being

There are other impacts which teachers value, in particular for students to develop as members of society:

"It's vital, it's not just about preventing youth homelessness but the way they break down stereotypes and misinformation – it's a vital part of the curriculum in terms of empathy and awareness." PSHE teacher

In particular, the sharing of the peer educator 'story' at the end of the session was seen by everyone to be the most significant moment in terms of student learning, as it helps to crystallise the information that has been shared beforehand.

There is some delivery of the programme in Sheffield College, using the same format as the one used in schools, but slightly adapted for the older age group and the venue, which may not always be a classroom setting.

As noted above, engagement with colleges is through the pastoral care teams. The age at which young people are more likely to become homeless, or seek advice due to a threat of homelessness, is around 18 – 19, so this is a good time to provide information and messages that may be more directly relevant to young people's circumstances. The targeting of sessions at this point is not so straightforward as schools, as the distribution of young people is more fragmented across a number of educational and training provisions, with some not in any provision. Classroom teaching is mixed with lecture theatre delivery; the latter is viewed as a more difficult venue in terms of student engagement for the types of sessions which Roundabout deliver. With the likelihood of youth homelessness peaking around the age of 17, 18 and 19, however, this is an optimum age for providing up to date information and advice which could be of use in the next couple of years to some young people.

The Peer Education Worker and the peer educators will deliver sessions to any groups of young people. Whilst they have focussed predominantly on schools, they are keen to do more in colleges.

Every year, they deliver a session to 'SAYiT', a Sheffield based LGBT+ agency which provides support and advice to young people and to professionals working with young people. As noted on page 49 below, LGBT+ young people are likely to be at a higher risk of homelessness than many of their peers, in terms of familial rejection, abuse and violence.

There are other experiences which make young people at higher risk of homelessness, including:

- being a care leaver;
- involvement in the criminal justice system;
- not attending school regularly;
- being reported missing as a child;
- being involved in child sexual exploitation.

Some young people experience two or more of the above factors, placing them at even higher risk.²⁸ Whether a Peer Education service such as the one delivered by Roundabout could systematically try to reach these groups is a hypothetical question. Finding an answer to this would involve increasing capacity and resources to enable more partnership working, as well as increasing capacity to deliver more sessions.

Roundabout have compiled feedback from teachers, some of which is included in the annual reports to the National Lottery. There is a plethora of feedback from teaching staff, all of which is positive and provides the evidence base for why Roundabout are a regular fixture in PSHE lessons, once they have the 'foot through the door' of a school:

"Just wanted to say thank you so much for coming in to speak to our students on Friday. Firstly for all giving up your time and secondly for offering such an amazing experience for staff and students alike. Your honest approach and laid back attitude was great with the students, thank you also [for] being so open, answering questions and explaining so much about Roundabout. Thanks also to Shauna for sharing her personal story and talking on such a great level with the students. All of your approach with our students was ideal, they loved every minute and we are looking forward to working with you all very soon."

The perennial question of how to market more effectively the offer from the Peer Education programme remains unanswered. Schools through academisation are more autonomous, but that does not mean that they have to be more insular. Getting to the right person, at the right moment, just as the timetable is being filled for PSHE, is challenging, despite all the plaudits from other schools. This is not a Sheffield or South Yorkshire issue, but a national one. Using the time of Roundabout's senior managers, or the local authority, to try and open doors is not likely to make any significant impact within the world of a school. Until the national curriculum starts to reflect the housing challenges for young people, despite the best efforts of a number of individuals and agencies, it will remain this way.

It may be possible to do a little more work in the schools which are already working with the Peer Education Programme. One teacher recognised that Years 8 and 9 were getting whole lessons, but that topping this up again in Years 10 or 11 might be useful:

"Key Stage 4 have 'drop down days, not PSHE every week. So in effect it's a full day of PSHE. Could Roundabout make something work for that – like an assembly or an activity in the morning and then outreach work on a smaller basis? That would build on the knowledge of Key Stage 3." PSHE teacher and Head of Year 8

28 For example, in the 'Young People In' report published by St Basils in March 2021, 55% of care leavers who were homeless and assisted over lockdown in 2020 in the West Midlands were also involved in offending. See: <https://stbasils.org.uk/news/st-basils-publishes-young-people-in-report/>

When we asked them if they could change anything about the way in which the work was delivered, and what would they do differently, the Peer Educators agreed with this statement:

“...if I could change one thing – try to have one day in Years 10 and 11 when they can see us and those kids aged 15 and 16 to hear it – it’s more important than Year 7, which is young. Maybe doing a recap assembly with Year 10 and 11, or a recap during a study period – having a half an hour lesson.” KE, a peer educator

3.6 Linkages between Peer Education programme and the Mediation Service

One of the aims of the Peer Education programme is to increase young people’s knowledge of the help which is available to them and their families and give them information about how to access these services. There is a strong alignment in particular between the work of the Mediation Service within Roundabout and the Peer Education programme. All the schools which have the Peer Education programme are also offered drop-in sessions from the Mediation Service, although not all of them take this up and the Mediation Service’s contact details are given directly to young people in the sessions.

There are three part-time Mediation Workers in the Homeless Prevention Service. The Service is not funded by the National Lottery, but rather through two sources at the moment: a Children In Need grant for three years to work with young people aged 13 – 19, and through a contract with Sheffield City Council, to work with 16 – 21-year-olds.

As well as a strong linkage to the Drop In Service, the Mediation Workers offer follow up ‘drop in’ sessions in schools over lunchtimes, where the Peer Education Programme is running. In some schools, this is reported to be working well, whilst in others there is little take up from the students.

When asked what might be offered differently, teachers thought it was too difficult for some students to go and see someone about a personal issue in a school setting. They had other suggestions about an offer of mediation which aligns with the accelerated use of online platforms for delivering counselling and advice since the Covid-19 pandemic:

“We did take it [the offer of Mediation Drop In] up, but it didn’t really last – there wasn’t much take up – it was more kids not so much at risk of homelessness at the lunchtimes link support sessions... it would be better for the offer of mediation through Teams or by phone – the kids you want to access are not really going access that kind of support, they need someone to do the introduction and to get them there and talking”. A Faculty Leader for Life and Well-Being

To have on offer to schools both the Mediation Service and the Peer Education Programme is a valuable combination in terms of universal and more targeted early prevention work. The take up is largely through students’ self-referring, following a Peer Education session in a school or college.



3.7 The impact of Covid-19 pandemic on the Peer Education Programme and the Mediation Service

The rest of this section looks at the outcomes achieved to date through the Peer Education Programme. Before turning to the outcomes and learning, however, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic must be considered.

At the time of writing this report, there has been no work delivered directly within schools or colleges for 12 months – since the March 2020 lockdown. This has impacted significantly on the targets for 2019/20, and will also impact the targets for 2020/21.

The Peer Education Worker has been furloughed several times. However, since the Autumn Term of 2020, there has been contact with all the schools to find out more about other ways of delivering the programme. Work has started again with the young people who have been trained as peer educators, looking at other mediums for delivery. They are now working on a programme that teaching staff can deliver, providing:

- a guide for teachers;
- information sessions online;
- a set of life stories videos of the peer educators.

“Covid’s pushed us to do this – we should have done this sooner – but we’ve had the chance to think about how to do things differently. If we are going to spread the message, there’s no way we can get workers in every town and city so need a different way to work in schools”. Peer Education Worker

Whilst this might need to be an option for delivery – and the flexibility another medium brings is no doubt helpful – it is not viewed by teachers as the preferred model, especially in light of the ease with which sessions are set up and delivered with Roundabout, which requires no additional work for teaching staff:

“I would not change a thing.” A Faculty Leader for Life and Well-Being

“At Key Stage 3...1 hour a week...the way they do it now is perfect – they couldn’t do it in a way to have more impact. The universities don’t want to come into schools so much and want to provide on line resources but Roundabout is much more effective. The charities that come and do assemblies, they don’t have the impact of the pupils having a class session. I don’t think they [Roundabout] can improve the sessions.” PSHE teacher and Head of Year 8

Yet teachers were clear that the pandemic has heightened the challenges some children in schools experience at home, as well as their overall emotional well-being. This was expected by the teachers to continue:

“What I notice – the impact moving forwards – with schools shut you expect the pastoral side to be quieter. But there is an increase in need, for example, young people going missing from home”. PSHE teacher and Head of Year 8

This is echoed by the Mediation Service. The three workers described in an interview the demand as ‘hitting the roof’.

The medium through which mediation is delivered has had to change throughout the pandemic. It has given tacit permission for a wider range of communication methods to be trialled, offering new choices of communication channels to young people and their families. Due to the difficulties of getting a group together, the support offered in helping to resolve difficulties has shifted to a more individualised approach, focusing on the ways in which individuals can better manage conflict. Socially distanced walking is one method that has been used with some young people and parents. Text messaging with young people is usual, as are Zoom meetings. Use of the telephone with parents in particular has been perceived as being very successful partially because it is more time efficient for busy parents, but also – according to the view of a very experienced member of the Mediation Service – because there is a:

“...disinhibition effect over the phone. I’ve been blown away by how honest parents are being.”

Online mediation sessions through Zoom or other platforms are not offered to family groups, as these are seen as being too difficult to manage.

These new approaches are likely to be welcomed by schools:

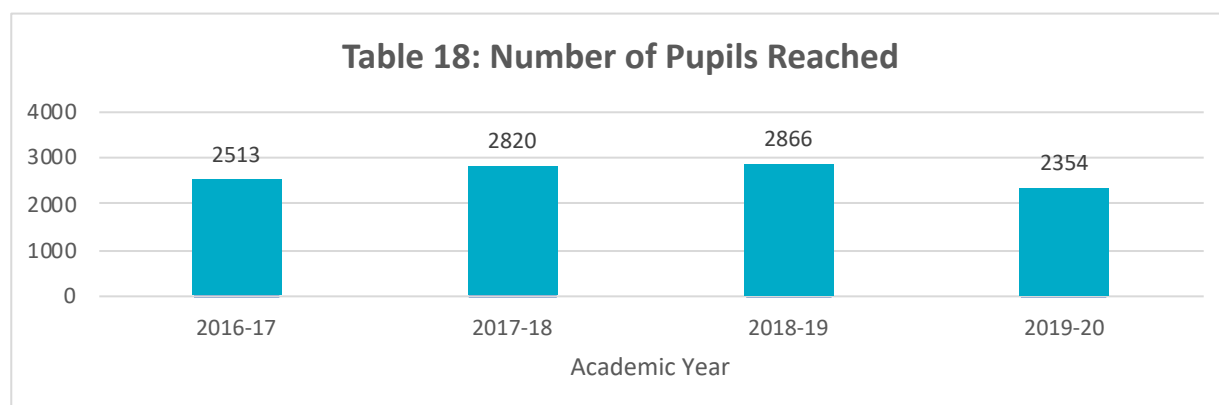
“They probably don’t need to come into school but working in safeguarding, it would be useful for us for referrals. That would be more targeted rather than generally. I can see mediation working through Teams and counselling”. PSHE teacher and Head of Year 8.

3.8 Peer Education Programme progress towards the National Lottery outcomes and target measures

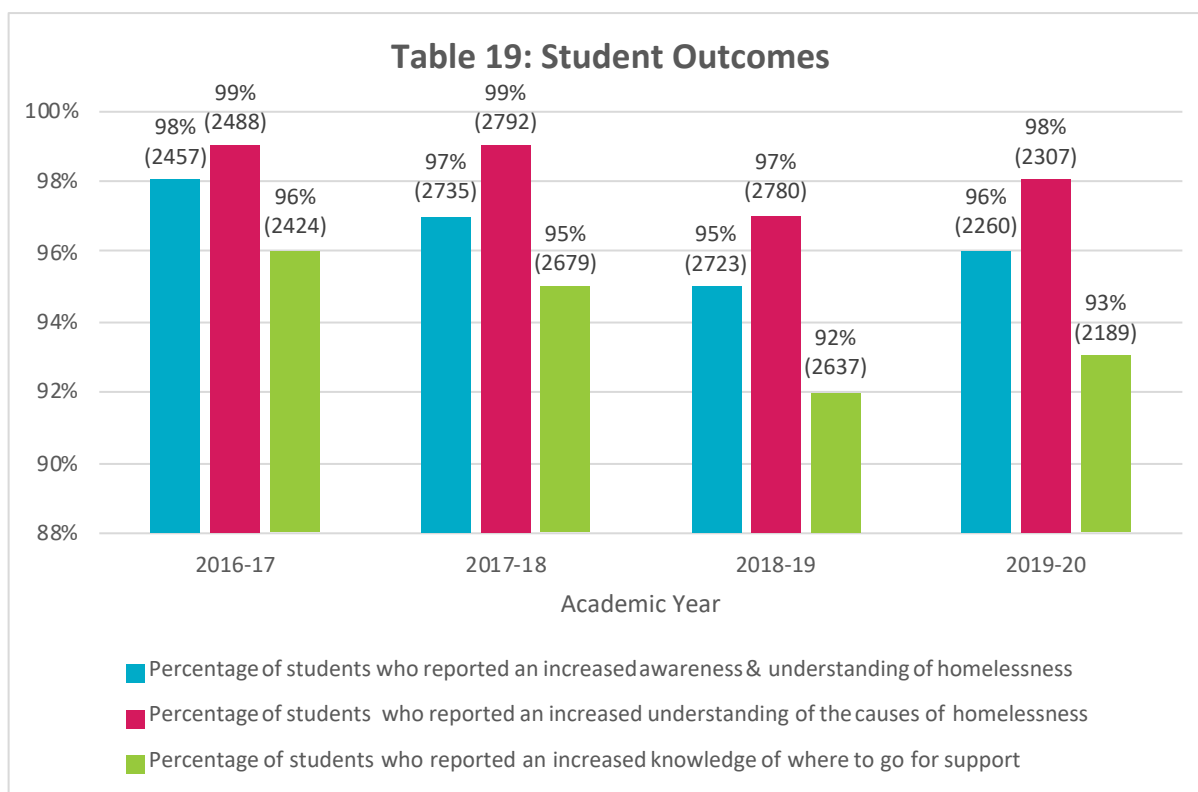
Year on year, until the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Peer Education Programme has made progress towards the outcomes agreed with the National Lottery.

Roundabout has worked with 20 of the 27 secondary schools and Sheffield College, across a number of the college sites. Some work was over just one academic year, rather than every year. This might be because of a change in the leadership of the PSHE part of the National Curriculum, a change in senior leadership, or a re-focussing of the school timetable following an Ofsted inspection. However, there is a solid core of around 14 schools which welcome Roundabout back every year. Through this longstanding set of relationships, the reach of the Programme is extensive.

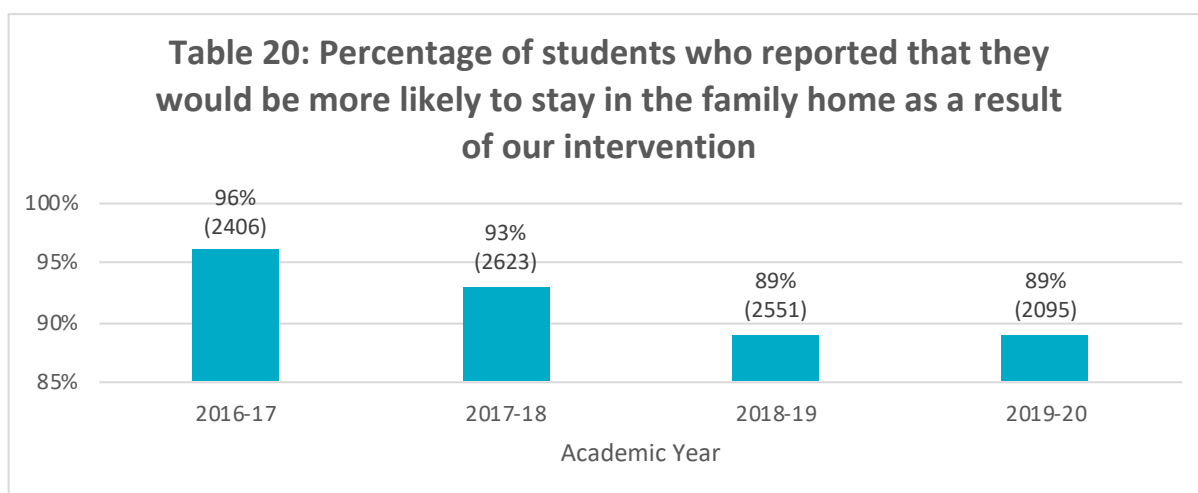
Whilst not an outcome in itself, the number of students attending sessions was rising until the fourth year of the funding, when from March 2020 onwards the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic meant schools work was temporarily suspended.



Three of the targets set were to have an impact on at least 3,000 young people over five years, through increasing students' knowledge and understanding of homelessness. These targets were easily reached by the end of Year 2 of the funding.



A further target was set around measuring young people's views about the likelihood of them staying in the family home as a result of the Peer Education Programme work. This target was lower, set at 750 young people over the five years of funding. This was also met with ease.



The final measure which Roundabout proposed to the National Lottery about the Peer Education Programme was intended to provide evidence of homelessness declining directly as a result of the work in schools. Through monitoring the use of emergency accommodation by young people, based on the school they attended, this could have indicated if there were any differences in usage.

Regrettably, there was insufficient data available to come to any view about this, as information relating to young people's last school when they entered emergency accommodation was not consistently recorded. The field where this information should have been recorded was, on the majority of occasions, left blank. One of the reasons for this is likely to be that the field was not mandatory. As such, the staff who were responsible for filling this in – all of whom work in Roundabout's supported housing – would not have appreciated the significance of recording this information within the context of the Peer Education Programme.

3.9 Understanding the impact of peer education work on prevention of youth homelessness

The metrics that Roundabout have used to understand the impact of the Peer Education Programme on young people are largely 'soft' measures, which relate to changes in knowledge and understanding. As set out in Tables 19 and 20 above, there is no doubt that these targets have been reached and exceeded, despite the Covid-19 pandemic.

Funding through local authorities for homelessness prevention work in schools – whether this is peer education-based or any other kind of programme – is often hard to come by, as there is no obvious or easy 'read across' between the universal education delivered to young people and youth homelessness trends.

Roundabout had planned to commission a five-year longitudinal evaluation as part of the National Lottery funding, which might have provided some evidence on the impact of the Peer Education Programme. However, the evaluation did not take place because the data that was required for cross-referencing, in order to assess the impact and the counterfactuals (that is, what would have taken place without the Peer Education Programme in schools), was judged to be too difficult to access. This judgement was made on the basis of the data being held by different parts of Sheffield City Council, which was under pressure and could not commit to working with Roundabout on this. This is disappointing, as it was a missed opportunity to identify impact; matching young people presenting as homeless with the school they attended would have provided some evidence of trends, even if it were non-conclusive.

As noted in Section 3.8 above, Roundabout did not keep data on the last school attended by young people going into their emergency accommodation. This may well have added some insight into any impact. As noted earlier and discussed below, however, there are many other variables in young people's lives that feed into levels of youth homelessness, which would need to be considered along with the matching of homelessness against schools.

Even if it had been possible to undertake a longitudinal study, as noted in Section 2, there has been no reliable baseline against which to measure youth homelessness overall. Whilst arguably this has improved since the legislation changed in April 2018, the goalposts have moved significantly as new duties and changes to existing ones have drawn more single people into the statutory homelessness arena earlier, including young people. This change took place almost half way through the National Lottery funding.

The issue of 'dead weight' – that is, what would have happened anyway and what could be confidently attributed to the Peer Education Programme's impact – would be an estimate at best, and it is for this reason that the agencies most likely to benefit in fiscal terms from upstream prevention are reticent about the relatively small investment in this part of the Positive Pathway. This is true across England, not just in South Yorkshire.

There are a range of other external factors which are known to be underlying causes of homelessness. As noted in Section 2, they are both structural and individual, and cannot be mitigated against by the agency undertaking the upstream prevention work in the 'universal space', although some may be resolved in the more 'targeted' work of, for example, the Mediation Service.

The impact of peer education work may make young people from participating schools or colleges more aware of the risks of homelessness and where to go to get help, advice or mediation, but other factors are still in play in homes and communities. For example, changes to welfare legislation, cuts to local service provision, the affordability within a local housing market, a parent losing their job and facing arrears, domestic abuse, or the introduction of a parent's new partner can all trigger a threat of homelessness. Prevention tools should be in place to assist individual young people and families with the wide range of causes of homelessness, although several challenges are complex and ultimately require new national policy and delivery mechanisms, rather than individual solutions.

Upstream prevention is not high-profile work – there is no spotlight on resolving crises, there are no case studies to put before funders or the media of helping young people in dire situations at this point. Outcomes and the metrics relate to developing some protective factors for young people. The willingness of several District councils in Nottinghamshire and more latterly in Derbyshire to commit some funding to the Broxtowe Youth Homeless 'Home Street Home' is unusual and laudable.

The difficulties in measuring a change by increasing self-awareness does not reduce the intrinsic value of the work delivered through peer education work. There are other examples of large Government-driven programmes which aimed to address changes amongst young people and other groups. One of these was the 10-year Teenage Pregnancy Strategy, which has been widely heralded as successful. Teenage pregnancies reduced by 51% between 1999 and 2010. It was a long term, multi-faceted intervention programme led by the national Government but delivered locally, largely through a partnership between health and education.

The success of the relationship and education work within the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy was accepted as a valid and critical element of the delivery of the strategy. A conscious decision was made to introduce systematically a programme of sex and relationship education (SRE), through the PSHE part of the curriculum, that would help to develop awareness and protective factors in young people's lives. One shortcoming identified in the evaluation of the strategy was the failure to make SRE a compulsory part of the National Curriculum during the life of the Strategy, even though it did become so in the autumn of 2020.²⁹

There are many differences between the causes of homelessness and those factors which influence rates of teenage pregnancy, but the principles and the style of approach which works in addressing complex social issues at a universal level have noticeable similarities:

- an aim to increase knowledge and understanding in a specific area of a young person's life;
- provision of information about where to go for more help and advice;
- delivered by trained educators;
- universal delivery which can be more targeted to those at higher risk;
- relies on partnership working.

²⁹ Hadley, A., Ingram, R., Chandra-Mouli, V (2016) 'Implementing the United Kingdom's ten- year teenage pregnancy strategy for England (1999-2010): How was this done and what did it achieve?'

The case has not yet been made nationally for housing and homelessness prevention to be integrated into the National Curriculum, and there may never be Government appetite to change this. That is no reason for local authorities to not invest in this type of provision, though. As will be shown in Section 5, the cost of homelessness far outweighs the cost of earlier prevention activity.

Even if it is not possible to attribute directly any reductions without a longitudinal study, it is reasonable to assume a greater level of awareness will prompt some young people to understand the ramifications of homelessness, and to ask for help earlier than they might otherwise have done. As will be outlined in Section 4, a high proportion of young people accessing the Drop In Service are self-referrals – well over 60% each year. Most of these young people are threatened with homelessness from their parental home, and Roundabout has a high success rate in resolving situations with families and avoiding a repeated threat of homelessness.

It is therefore very likely that a small investment in that universal space helps to reduce the numbers seeking help at a later stage – when they are already homeless. This can have a profound impact on their life chances, as well as on a local authority (in terms of duties and budgets), as 16 or 17-year-olds would potentially become looked after children on this basis and others would be owed a 'relief' duty, often resulting in moving to supported housing and then into social housing.



Section 4: The Homelessness Prevention Service ‘Drop In’

4.1 Overview

The ‘Drop In’ service, which Roundabout has also had funding for through the National Lottery, is set predominantly within the third ‘element’ of the Positive Pathway framework, as set out in Appendix One, covering the prevention and relief of homelessness.

This is described as:

*“An integrated response for young people who need help with housing and a gateway to commissioned accommodation and support...Led by the Housing Authority and Children’s Services, there is an integrated service for young people who are homeless, at risk of homelessness or need help with planned transitions to independence. Housing options and homelessness prevention services come together, often co-located, with other services including support for pathways into learning and work. Underpinned by assessment and including a needs driven gateway into commissioned supported accommodation and flexible housing related support services. This is a critical data collection point to inform ongoing development of the pathway.”*³⁰

The Drop In Service does not fit the description above neatly, as its delivery arrangements are not part of a formal local authority partnership. However, the Service works closely with Sheffield City Council, and some of the elements outlined above are accessed through the local authority not through Roundabout.

General housing advice is also part of the function of the Drop In Service. Through the Service, young people who are not yet imminently homeless but who have housing and relationship issues that they need help with are referred into other prevention services, in particular the Mediation Service, whose staff have a constant presence within the Drop In Service. These parts fit more into the second element of the Positive Pathway, providing advice and targeted early prevention work which aims to avert any homelessness crisis and plan solutions with families. Most of the young people who tend to use the Service are imminently or already homeless. In this sense, the Service is not only a ‘prevention’ service, but is providing support to resolve homelessness as well.

The outcome that Roundabout was seeking through the National Lottery funding was to increase access to more timely advice and services which would prevent homelessness and empower young people to make decisions, often with their families, in a more planned way if that was possible.

Table 21: The ‘Reaching Communities’ National Lottery metrics and targets specifically relating to the Drop In Service

Outcome 3:	Metric/indicator:	Target:
Young people have improved knowledge and skills needed to access appropriate, planned accommodation, when needed.	Young people accessing the drop-in facility able to access secure accommodation	450 young people per year by the end of the project .

³⁰ From the Positive Pathway framework, 2019 (St Basils): <https://stbasils.org.uk/about-us/the-positive-pathway/>

The Drop In Service was developed to be young-person-friendly and to offer more than just advice. Open between 10.00am and 4.30pm every week day, it was consciously designed to be comfortable and welcoming, offering hot drinks and food if young people had not eaten. Through working with a number of other relevant agencies, as well the other parts of the Homeless Prevention Service, the aim is to avoid homelessness becoming a reality in young people's lives.

As mentioned in Section 2, there was a significant change in legislation in April 2018. The intention of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 was to give assistance to more people at risk of homelessness, regardless of their 'priority need' status, providing them with support at an earlier stage. The Act aimed to refocus local authorities into more practical prevention of homelessness and swift relief where people do become homeless. It has meant a sharp rise in single people across England accessing help on a statutory footing, who may have had very little assistance in the past.

Since the Homelessness Reduction Act was introduced in April 2018, there have been some changes in the way that youth homelessness prevention services work. For some local authority areas, the changes have not been significant, whilst for others change has been far reaching. See Appendix Four for some examples of different models in cities.

The seismic change in statutory homelessness terms has not altered significantly the way in which the Drop In Service has worked with young people or how information has been recorded about the young people.

“Yes [it has changed] slowly but not hugely. It has changed the processes – but has not changed things massively in terms of access to supported housing.” Roundabout Homeless Advice Worker

Furthermore, the change does not seem to have reduced the number of young people coming through the doors of the Drop In Service, which had, until the Covid-19 pandemic, been rising (see Table 22 below).

However, this change does mean that from April 2018, most of the young people accessing the Drop In Service would – if they had approached the Council – also have been owed a statutory duty, because they were eligible, homeless or threatened with homelessness within 56 days.

The Drop In Service is set in Sheffield city centre, and the vast majority of the young people who use the Service are from Sheffield. For this reason, any local authority statistics in this section of the report relate to Sheffield and, where appropriate, other 'core city' local authority areas.

4.2 The functions within the Drop In Service

When young people contact the Drop In Service, the Homeless Prevention staff will take personal details and undertake a short assessment of their needs. The Service can offer hot drinks and something to eat for those that need it.

Work with young people can be over several weeks or months, or may just be a one-off visit. There are a wide range of tools and services available to assist young people through the wider Homeless Prevention Service and other organisations:

- Advice on housing options for young people
- Advice on housing law
- Referral to Roundabout's Mediation Service for anyone aged under 21
- Referral to Roundabout's Employment and Skills Service
- Referral to Roundabout's Supporting Tenant Service to stop accommodation from breaking down
- Helping young people claim welfare benefits
- Helping make applications to the local authority for Discretionary Housing Payments³¹
- Referral to Roundabout's Private Rented Service
- Help to apply to the Council for social housing
- Referral to Roundabout's Future Builder accommodation, providing apprenticeships in the building trades and low rent housing for those in employment or training
- Referral to the Housing Solutions Service, which is Sheffield City Council's statutory homelessness service to make a homelessness application
- Referral to the Council's Supported Housing Pathway, the single point of access for supported housing
- Access to an emergency bed in Roundabout's supported accommodation
- Referral to Roundabout's Rapid Rehousing Service – a Housing First model for young people who are rough sleeping and in a cycle of repeat homelessness
- Referrals to specialist agencies, including Children's Services, primary care, mental health and substance misuse services

This is an impressive range of tools and options, which enables the Drop In Service to help to prevent or relieve significant proportion of homelessness, either directly through their own services or through partnership working with other agencies.

4.3 Partnership working to prevent homelessness

Joint working to prevent homelessness lies at the heart of successful services. Homelessness services within local authorities which tend to be more outward facing and proactively seek partnerships tend to perform better than those which operate in a 'silo'. This is true for all homelessness services, but especially of those tailored towards young people, whose homelessness is often not about housing per se but driven by other issues. For these young people, partnership is critical if homelessness is to be resolved. This is reflected in the Positive Pathway model and the accompanying toolkit of advice and information.

Roundabout works with a wide range of agencies to support young people, including Job Centre Plus, primary care and specialist health agencies, and other voluntary agencies, including other

31 These are discretionary payments from DWP, administered through housing authorities, which may be made to those who already qualify for housing benefit, in order to top up short falls in rent or for other purposes to assist people to keep accommodation or access accommodation.

supported housing providers, the Citizen's Advice Bureau, and housing associations. In addition, Roundabout works closely with the Youth Offending Service in the city, and together they have devised a pathway for young people who are involved in the criminal justice system and are at risk of homelessness.

The major partnership and joint working arrangement for the Drop In Service is with Sheffield City Council. There is regular communication on casework between the Drop In Service and the Housing Solutions Service and the social worker from Children's Services, who leads on assessments for 16 and 17-year-olds who may be at risk of homelessness.

Over the last two or three years, the arrangements for joint working are reported by both the local authority and Roundabout staff to have improved.

"Relationships with the council are loads better – they trust what we say and that the young person is not blagging it. Generally it's loads better." Homeless Prevention Worker, the Drop In Service

There is not one way to deliver services to young people at risk of homelessness, but there are some features which make prevention more effective. In smaller local authority areas, it can be difficult to achieve the range and depth of service provision needed. In larger 'core' cities roughly equivalent to Sheffield, however, there is some economy of scale which makes a more specialist youth homelessness service more feasible.³² Most of the core cities have specialist youth prevention services as well as supported housing for young people.

The Housing Solutions Service in Sheffield City Council do not have any specialist youth housing officer posts, so having a positive relationship with a provider agency like Roundabout, who can offer a wide range of services to young people, is important. More specialist posts embedded in statutory services, or a dedicated youth-focussed homelessness service, are cited in the Positive Pathway document and in feedback from many local authorities as being at the heart of their ability to better manage youth homelessness.

The challenges of working with young people without a dedicated post or small team in the Housing Solutions Service were recognised by the Team Managers:

"...young people are generally not a very organised bunch of clients" Housing Solutions Team Manager

As trust and understanding have grown, new ways of working have been agreed to improve outcomes and make the experience for young people more seamless between the Drop In Service and the Housing Solutions Service.

Examples of simple but important features include:

- Instead of needing to call a general telephone number to access help through the Housing Solutions Service, during the last year of Covid 19 pandemic, young people aged 18 – 25 who have contacted the Drop In Service for help and do not have any accommodation that night can be referred by Roundabout straight through to the duty officer via a direct line. Prior to this, only 16 and 17-year-olds could access the Council through the direct line, and some 18 – 25-year-olds were not reaching the Council services due to the length of time it was taking for a response.

32 Sheffield is one of the largest cities in England outside London, other 'core' cities are Birmingham, Leeds, Bristol, Manchester, Nottingham, Newcastle and Liverpool.

- Housing Solutions officers walking with young people over to the Drop In Service.
- Involvement in discussions between Children's Services and Housing Solutions Service regarding 16 and 17-year-olds at risk of homelessness.

The Drop In Service workers and the Team Managers in the Housing Solutions Service identified that for 16 and 17-year-olds, some quick joint prevention work prior to the triggering of a child-in-need assessment would be beneficial:

“Sometimes there is more that can be done – in terms of the Housing Solutions Service working more with Roundabout before a case comes to [the social worker for homeless 16 and 17-year-olds]. We were talking about this before Covid and the protocol – doing home visits together.” Team Manager in the Housing Solutions Service

This became a plan, backed by a joint protocol, setting out a new way of working from 2020. Two Housing Solutions Officers had been identified to undertake immediate home visits with the Homeless Prevention Worker at the Drop In Service before a child-in-need assessment commenced, but this has had to go on hold due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Both Housing Solutions Team Managers interviewed were extremely positive about this new development, and expressed disappointment at not being able to proceed with this plan. Alongside this, there is interest in the Housing Solutions Service officers undertaking homelessness assessments in the Roundabout office.

Despite all of the positive direction of travel, there remains some considerable progress to be made. The Housing Solutions Service staff are so busy that many have had little time to familiarise themselves with the range of services which sit within the Homeless Prevention Service. The Private Rented and the Employment and Skills Services, for example, were reported to be rarely accessed via referrals from the Housing Solutions Services. The Mediation Service is partly funded by Sheffield City Council, but referral rates have not been as high as hoped:

“We don’t get many [referrals] from Housing Solutions Service – it’s been slow progress. In some cases, workers do refer, that’s down to the case worker and how they explain it [to the young person]. If its asked as a simple tick box question, then young people are likely to say no.” Roundabout Homeless Prevention Service Mediation Worker

“At times I don’t think we [Children’s Services] use the Roundabout Homeless Prevention Service enough. We need to try things that they offer more – and the Housing Solutions Service do too.” Social worker, Children’s Services, Sheffield City Council

A different view was given by one Team Manager from the Housing Solutions Service, who described a culture in the past within the Drop In Service where ***“they really did push for the local authority to deal with cases rather than show us they had exhausted all possibilities – including mediation, but when we tried, we managed to resolve it.”***

This suggests that there was some ‘ping pong’ of young people between the two Services which were not as synchronised as they might have been. Any disagreements or misunderstandings are much easier to resolve with increased trust and communication. This sense of working together better has been accelerated since the Covid-19 pandemic, which appears to have acted as a catalyst for improving inter-organisational relationships.

It also suggests that the Council's involvement might lead to parents being more likely to readily accept support, helping a teenager to find a way forward and avoid homelessness – potentially because of the significance of the party involved being 'the council', however, there is no evidence for this.

4.4 Young people's referral rates, routes and access to the Drop In Service

With the exception of the Year 4 of the funding, which included the lockdown period from March 2020 until the end of June 2020, the numbers of young people using the Service overall have been increasing:

Table 22: The numbers of young people accessing the Drop In Service

Years (July – June)	Year 1: 2016/17	Year 2 : 2017/18	Year 3: 2018/19	Year 4: 2019/20
Numbers of young people accessing the Drop In Service	403	477	521	455

It might have been assumed that the numbers of young people approaching the Drop In Service would reduce, given the new duties placed on local authorities to assist single people who are threatened with homelessness. This has not been the case, although numbers were slightly lower in 2019/20. This may have been due to the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, from March – June 2020.

The rate of referral from different sources is not being recorded in any detail at the moment, so it is not possible to set out more in-depth evidence of the referral routes in and how well-utilised these are.

The majority of young people are self referrals and it can be assumed they know about the Service because a friend has told them about it, or they attended a Peer Education session in school or college, or they looked up where to get help on the internet. There is no signposting between the City Council website and the Drop In Service, so all of the searches young people make will find Roundabout directly.

From a snapshot of 139 young people in 2019/20, 64% had made their own way to the Drop In Service, through word of mouth, prior knowledge, or an internet search.

Whether or not young people had prior knowledge of the Service through being part of a Peer Education session in a school is not a question which is asked when young people arrive into the Service. This is understandable, given that many young people are likely to want practical help and reassurance about their present concern or crisis, and will not understand the relevance of being asked about what happened in a classroom some time before.

In terms of the referral route via Sheffield City Council, it is helpful to have an understanding of how their process works, which is a single access point into the Housing Solutions Service, via a telephone service, which went live in 2015. The contact starts with a triage call, and then a Housing Solutions Officer calls the customer back. How well these kinds of processes work for

young people or people with complex needs is difficult to discern. This is not only an issue in Sheffield; many local areas use a telephone access point, and this may well become the ‘modus operandi’ in many areas following the experience of Covid -19 pandemic:

“They [the Housing Solutions Service] don’t see young people face to face at the Council at all. This really changes the way the service is delivered. So staff will come across and see young people sometimes [in the Drop In Service] if they need to as they understand that they will not get their issues sorted with phone access only.” Homeless Prevention Worker, the Drop In Service.

Because of the location of the building – in the middle of the city centre – the Drop In Service staff believe there is also some ‘natural pick up’ of young people, who want to see someone and talk to them face-to-face.

The Housing Solutions Service has, over time, made more referrals to the Drop In Service. As noted above, this is in part a reflection of the positive partnership working between the Services and the need for more help as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

“We encourage young people to go to Roundabout at the point of triage”. Team Manager, Housing Solutions Service

“Roundabout communicate well with us...they keep people from our doors...the referral to them is easy”. Team Manager, Housing Solutions Service

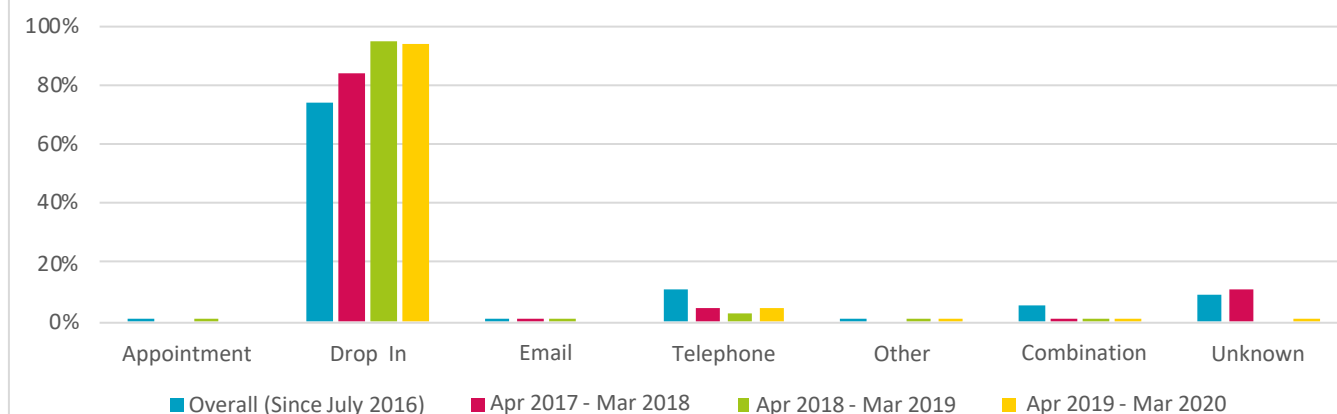
In terms of young people, it may be that applications for those at risk of homelessness are not always being taken by the local authority, because some young people are being diverted at the point of telephone triage through to a free phone number for Roundabout. Whilst this is understandable, in terms of a more youth-focussed response, it may produce a reduction in the overall numbers owed a statutory duty, masking levels of demand and any associated positive outcomes, which will appear for Roundabout but not the local authority (see 4.6 below for more on this).

In addition, because it is so close to Sheffield City Council’s Housing Solutions Service, some young people are directed informally by the Council to the Drop In Service for general advice, or simply as somewhere welcoming and comfortable to wait for their appointment with the local authority. Other young people are more formally referred by the Housing Solutions Service or the social worker who works with homeless 16 – 17-year-olds for particular services – in particular, the Mediation Service.

Other agencies also refer young people to the Drop In Service. Colleges are more likely to refer than schools because of the age of the young people. Young people are also referred through the Citizen’s Advice Bureau and other local agencies.

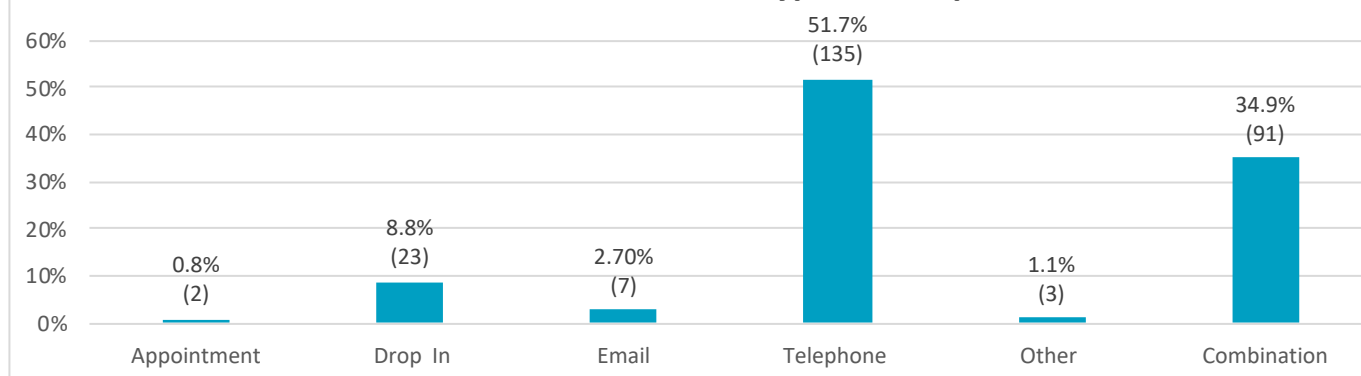
There has been a change in the use of different access routes due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The chart below shows the different types of ‘first contact’ – most of which usually takes the form of young people walking into the Service.

Table 23: First contact type (Overall and Annually)



Not surprisingly, there has been a marked change in the way in which young people access advice and assistance from the Drop In Service since the U.K. entered a period of lockdown as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The table below looks at contact since April 2020:

Table 24: Contact Type Since April 2020



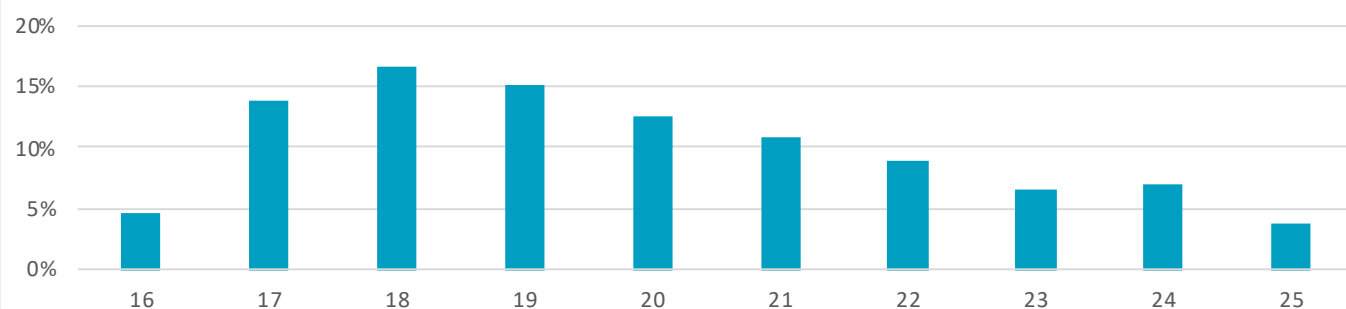
Whether the patterns of reaching and working with young people will continue in the same way once the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions are lifted is unknown. Feedback from homeless young people over lockdown has been that they value and appreciate face to face contact at least for some of the work with a council or voluntary agency³³. However, the learning from these new ways of communicating with young people should inform any internal service review or joint working discussions with local authorities in the future.

4.5 The profiles of the young people accessing the Drop In Service

Equalities data is routinely collected by the Drop In Service, giving some background information about young people in terms of age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion and disability.

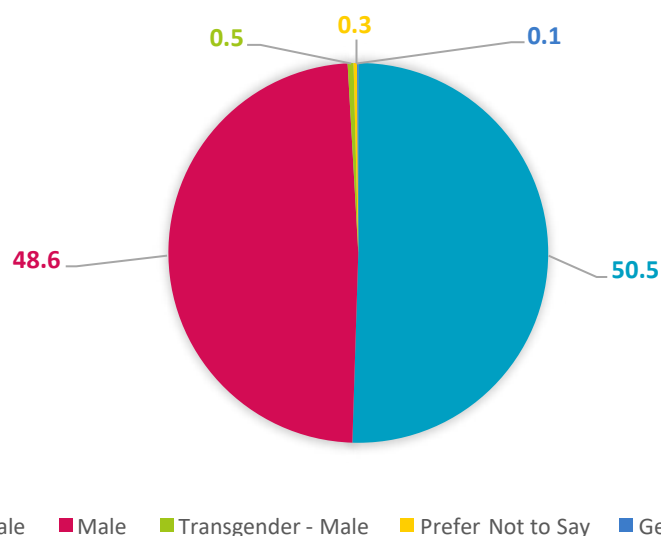
³³ See the St Basils 'Young People In' report (2021) on homelessness amongst 16 – 25-year-olds during the first national lockdown: <https://stbasils.org.uk/news/st-basils-publishes-young-people-in-report/>

Table 25: Age of Clients between July 2016 and December 2020



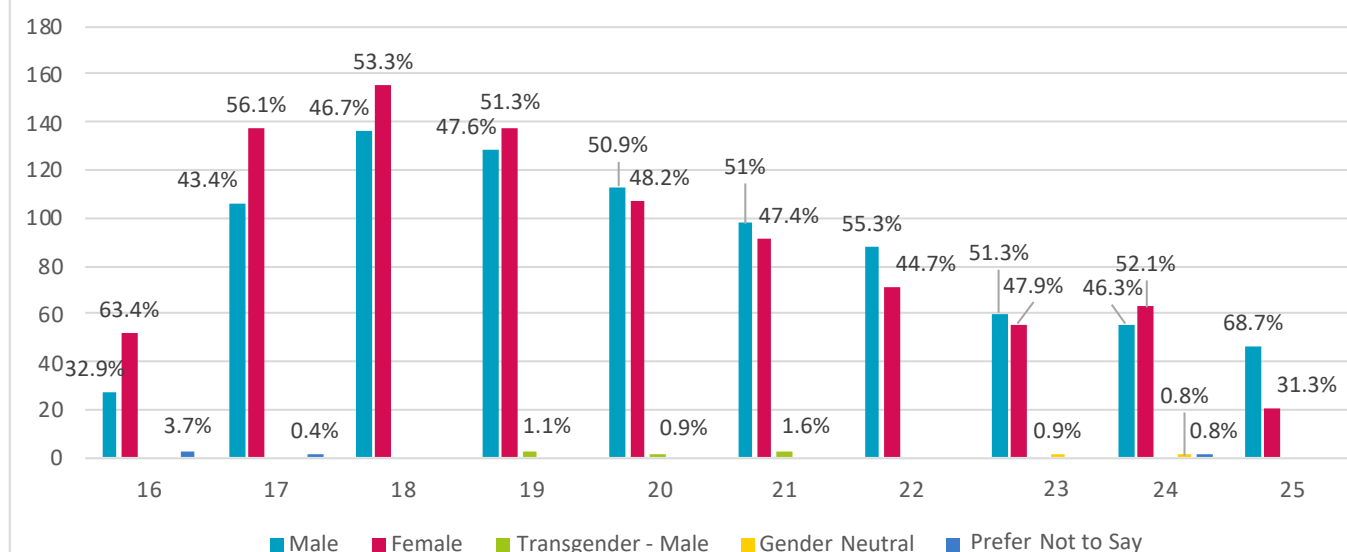
Based on the information collected for almost four-and-a-half years in the Drop In Service, the distribution by age shows that just over 50% of the young people visiting the Drop In Service do so whilst they are still teenagers. Like all other services working with mainly single young people at risk of homelessness, there are fewer young people coming for help as they get older. There is no in-depth research available regarding age and youth homelessness, but this pattern is likely due to a wide range of factors, such as changes in employment status, forming of new relationships, changing relationships with family, and whether or not they have children.

TABLE 26: GENDER OF CLIENTS



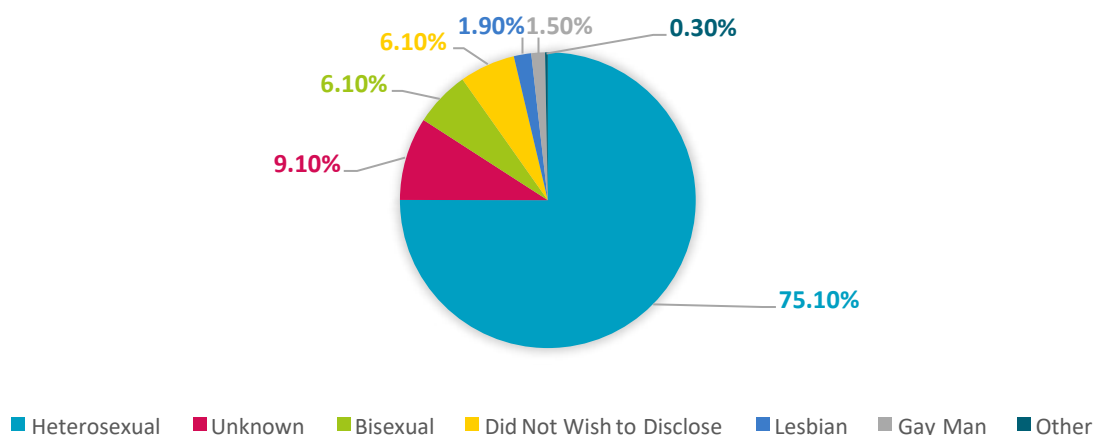
There is a general trend across England regarding youth homelessness, gender and age. The general pattern is that single young women are more likely to seek help than young men whilst in their teenage years, but the older the single young person is, the more likely it is that they will be male. Men are at much higher risk of rough sleeping than women, and young people in their twenties are more likely to rough sleep than their teenage counterparts.

Table 27: Requests for advice and assistance by gender and by age



It is clear that the routes in and out of homelessness differ between young men and young women.³⁴ There has been no definitive research on this since the homelessness legislation changed, but some views on why this might be the case relate to young women being more likely to be in relationships with children in their early twenties, and living in their own tenancy or settled accommodation. If they needed help as a young family, they would have an automatic 'priority need' for accommodation, and therefore be more likely to directly access the main Housing Solutions Service in Sheffield for help. Other anecdotal evidence points to young women being more skilled at negotiating relationships with family and friends if they are at risk of homelessness, but it is also the case that young women are at higher risk of experiencing domestic abuse in a relationship.

TABLE 28: SEXUAL ORIENTATION OF CLIENTS



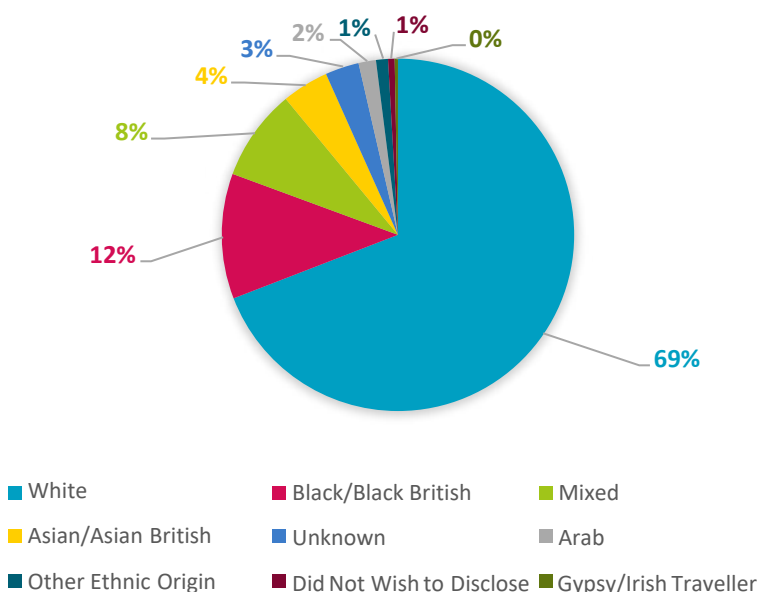
Based on the 2015 research by the Albert Kennedy Trust, LGBT+ young people are at higher risk of homelessness in terms of familial rejection, abuse and violence.³⁵ However, the evidence for this is not borne out in some self-reporting, with 9% 'not known' and a further 6% who did not wish

³⁴ See Page 66 in Watts, B., Johnsen, S., & Sosenko, F. (2015) Youth homelessness in the UK: A review for The OVO Foundation, Available at: <https://pureapps2.hw.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/9258335>

³⁵ LGBT Youth Homelessness: A UK National Scoping of Case, Prevalence, Response and Outcome, 2015

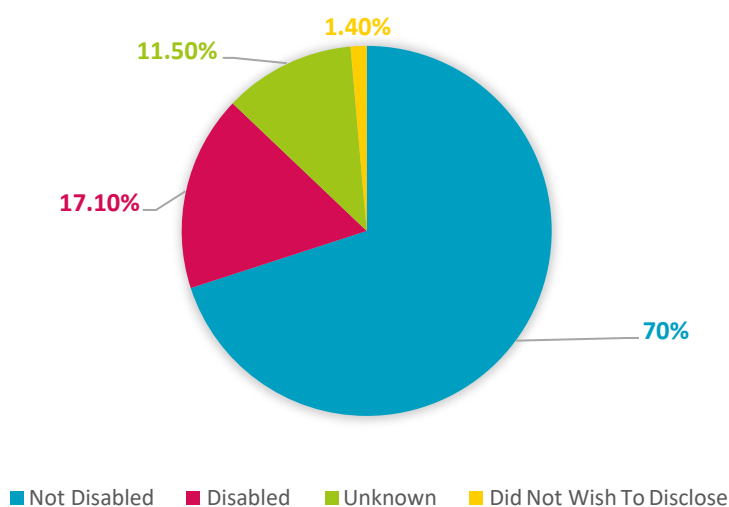
to say. It is also very likely that some young people will have self-reported being heterosexual, when they are LGBT+. Taking all these points together, the numbers reporting as LGBT+ are likely to be significantly lower than the actual numbers requesting assistance.

TABLE 29: ETHNICITY OF CLIENTS



The last published census was in 2011,³⁶ and there have been changes in the ethnicity of the population in every area since then. It would be useful to look in more detail at ethnicity and youth homelessness with Sheffield City Council. Based on the data in the chart above, it appears that Black British, Caribbean or African young people may be significantly over-represented in their use of the Drop In Service, whilst White British or other white young people and Asian and Asian British young people may be under-represented.

TABLE 30: DISABILITY STATUS OF CLIENTS



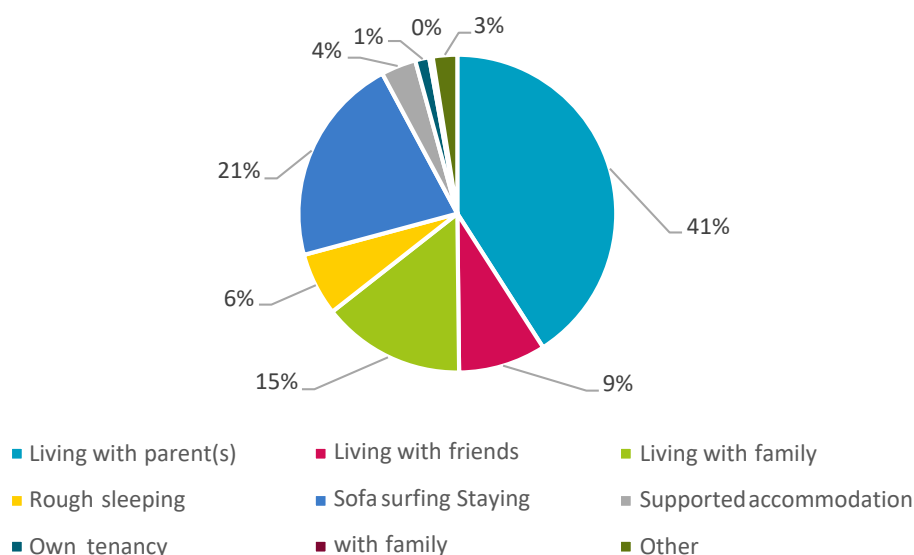
Young people are asked in the assessment process if they consider themselves to have a disability, so the above graph displays self-reported data. The definition of disability includes

36 From the 2011 population census in Sheffield, 84% White (81% White British, 0.5% White Irish, 0.1% Gypsy or Irish Traveller, 2.3% other white); 8% Asian (4% Pakistani, 1.3% Chinese, 1.1% Indian, 0.6% Bangladeshi, 1.0% other Asian); 3.6% Black (2.1% African, 1% Caribbean 0.5% other black); 1.5% Arab; 2.4% mixed race; (1.0% White and Black Caribbean, 0.2% White and Black African, 0.6% White and Asian, 0.6% other mixed) 0.7% other ethnic group

physical and learning disabilities. Mental health issues of a severe and enduring nature are also considered to be a disability. In the 2011 census, 19% of Sheffield residents were reported to have a health issue or a disability which limited daily activity in some way.

The accommodation at the point of making contact with the Drop In Service shows that, at a young age, exactly half of young people were living with parents or with extended family. 21% of the young people were sofa-surfing, however, which is of concern given that it means that they are already homeless. Understanding their journeys into homelessness, in terms of the age of the first homelessness episode, the agencies they approached for help, the causes, and any incidences of repeat homelessness, would all feed into joint planning for the future, in terms of earlier targeted work to prevent homelessness.

Table 31: Accommodation type for 291 young people in 2019/20, prior to intervention from Drop In Service



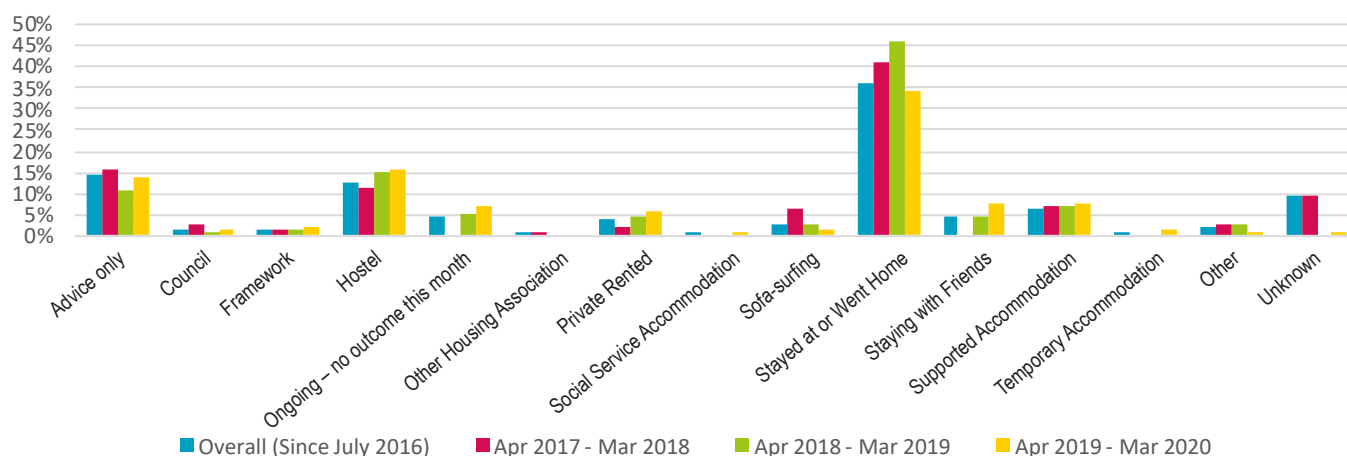
There are other pieces of information which help in understanding young people and their journeys into homelessness. Roundabout is not a statutory service and has not needed to consistently maintain detailed records of certain information, such as the causes of homelessness, which would provide more a comprehensive insight into young people's situations prior to seeking advice or help from the Drop In Service.

4.6 The outcomes for young people from the Drop In Service

The majority of outcomes achieved through the Drop In Service relate to remaining or returning to the family home or wider family network. This is arguably the most prized outcome, as long as this is a safe and suitable option for a young person. Leaving home at a young age is difficult enough, but leaving in crisis – with little or no family support – is extremely challenging, and young people experience this understandably as traumatic. Risks of future homelessness also increase the earlier the first episode of homeless occurs.³⁷

³⁷ See page 29 in Bramley, G; Fitzpatrick, S; Edwards, J; Ford, D; Johnsen S; Sosenko F; Watkins D. (2015) 'Hard Edges: Mapping Severe and Multiple Disadvantage', published by the Lankelly Chase Foundation.

Table 32: Outcomes of Advice and Support

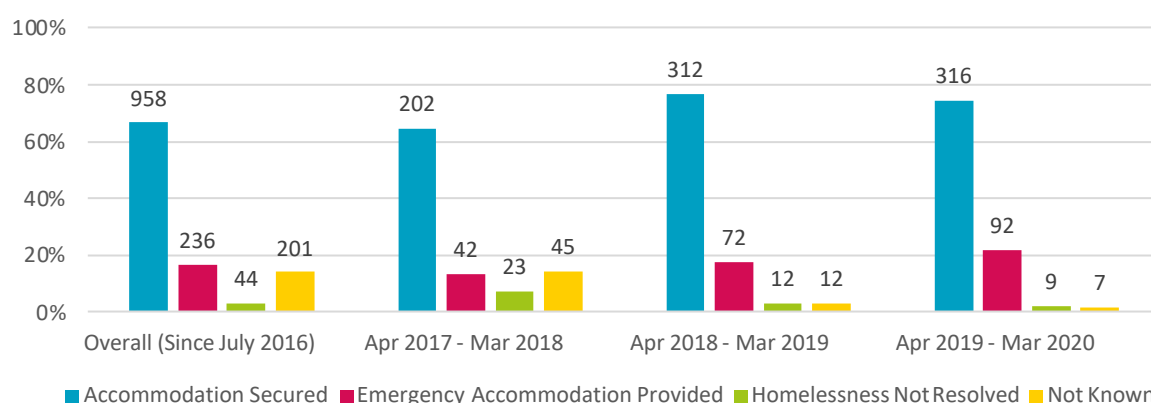


The Drop In Service was acknowledged by staff from statutory agencies in terms of assisting their work in supporting better outcomes for young people:

“Young people want to know that there is someone there to help them. It alleviates the pressures in the family home. In that sense, young people do refuse Section 20 [the option to become a looked after child for homeless 16 and 17 year olds] and know they have other options...they can go and visit accommodation as well – or a family can make a decision based on that. It’s slowing it down and helping families to plan. Now Roundabout have a duty officer they can pick things up quickly...” Social worker for 16 and 17-year-olds, Children’s Services, Sheffield City Council

The table below shows the Drop In Service outcomes for accommodation alone, taking out the numbers seeking ‘Advice’ only or where the work was still ongoing. The data in the chart below uses the same reporting periods as local authorities use when they submit returns on homelessness to the MHCLG, allowing some ‘read across’ between different sets of data.

Table 33: Accommodation outcomes for young people accessing the Drop In Service



To give the table above some context, in 2019/20 Sheffield City Council reported that 2,158 households had had their homelessness either prevented or relieved. This includes families,

childless couples and single people of all ages. Through the Drop In Service, 316 young people in the same year were assisted to retain or move to secure housing. However, the picture is a little more complicated, and the accommodation outcomes which are achieved by the Drop In Service and Sheffield City Council cannot be compared directly over the last four-and-a-half years. This is because:

- The homelessness legislation changed significantly in April 2018 and the reporting also changed.
- The 'H-CLIC' tables do not give outcomes on accommodation by age or by household type (single, family etc.).
- The outcomes for the Drop In Service relate to one distinct group, for whom there are a number of options including supported housing options and negotiation/mediation with parents for their children to remain at home. The local authority outcomes relate to all household types, who do not all have the same options as single 16 – 25-year-olds.
- Roundabout do not differentiate between 'prevention' and 'relief' outcomes at the moment, which means that a direct 'like for like' comparison is not possible.
- Local authority homelessness statistics are classed as 'experimental' because data collection changed so significantly in April 2018. The new case level recording systems have taken some time to bed in.

But, despite all of the caveats above, it is possible to make some observations. In order to do so we have looked at a snapshot of 12 months of accommodation outcome data between the Drop In Service and Sheffield City Council. First of all, this needs to be set into some context nationally. Below is some homelessness data reported by some of the large cities in England. There are many variables to consider when interpreting this data, not least the housing market and how well established the case management systems are.



Table 34: Prevention and Relief ‘Securing of Accommodation’ Rate 2019-20 for all households

Area	Households Assessed as Threatened with Homelessness per 000s	Prevention Duty ‘Securing of Accommodation’ Rate: Percentage (and number) of Households with Accommodation Secured at end of Prevention Duty	Households Assessed as Homeless per 000s	Relief Duty ‘Securing of Accommodation’ Rate: Percentage (and number) of Households with Accommodation Secured at end of Relief Duty
England	6.39	58.5% (81,500)	5.94	40.0% (61,930)
Yorkshire and the Humber	6.87	67.7% (10,730)	5.96	52.9% (8,350)
Birmingham	4.99	Not available	10.47	Not available
Bristol	2.99	30.8% (148)	7.69	30.7% (539)
Leeds	15.26	86.4% (4,419)	4.07	65.4% (1,099)
Liverpool	3.62	53.0% (506)	5.49	59.7% (668)
Manchester	10.57	53.2% (1,152)	13.40	35.6% (1,111)
Nottingham	8.98	36.9% (401)	12.00	35.3% (613)
Sheffield	2.94	44.3% (282)	10.77	47.1% (1,287)

***Prevention and Relief Duty Success Rates are taken from the Government’s Homelessness Statistics for 2019/20. This is based on whether a household retained their current accommodation or moved to alternative accommodation with a prospect of this being available for six months.**

The reasons for the variables between comparator authorities is far more complex than any simple table can demonstrate, and would need some detailed research in its own right in order to adequately address this. By way of an example, see Appendix Three for a table of some of the comparator cities, which sets out some of the factors and differentials.

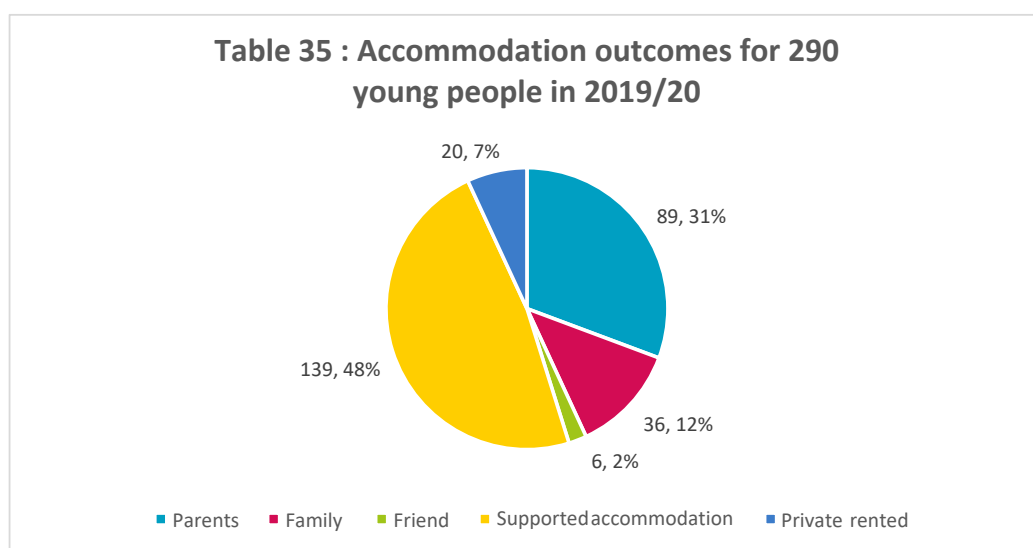
From the statistics above, it appears that Sheffield City Council has been taking less applications where people are threatened with homelessness within 56 days in comparison to most of the other ‘core’ cities. Bristol is the exception to this, which also has a low rate of preventions being ended through the securing of accommodation. Conversely, a relatively high proportion of applications are taken in Sheffield at the point of homelessness, with only Manchester and Nottingham having a higher proportion. Generally speaking, actual homelessness is harder to resolve than the threat of homelessness, which is why local authorities would prefer more approaches at the point of prevention.

It was recognised by the two Team Managers in the Housing Solutions Service that we spoke to that the levels of prevention ‘success’ needed to be improved, and that some prevention outcomes are getting ‘lost’. There are a few reasons why homelessness applications are not taken, which have been noted by the Team Managers and all of the Drop In Service staff: either because young people went straight to Roundabout, they did not wish to take out a homelessness application, or because they were directed there by the Housing Solutions Service at the telephone triage point, before an application was taken. There is currently no way to assess this, because the two Services – which are working increasingly well together – have systems running in parallel which do not communicate with one another:

“One thing we need to do is to improve our preventions – they aren’t what they should be.”
Team Manager, Housing Solutions Service

There is likely to be some double counting of young people between the Drop In Service and the local authority’s outcomes, but the extent of this is not easy to determine because the systems do not align at the moment to allow for a comprehensive picture of youth housing needs and associated outcomes in Sheffield.

Based on young people whose homelessness was either prevented or relieved between April 2019 and March 2020 and who had a case open with the Drop In Service, we looked at accommodation outcomes for 290 young people. This did not include any cases of ‘advice’, or short stay temporary or emergency accommodation or social housing:



Of the 139 young people who went into supported housing, 72% were already homeless, had made a homelessness application and owed the relief duty. They were not prevention cases. This is set out in table 36 below. Of the 151 who either stayed or returned to parents, family or friends, or went into the private rented sector, we were not able to data-match with Sheffield City Council in terms of whether a homeless application had been taken at that time and if so, what duty was owed (if any). At the point at which assistance was requested from the Drop In Service, only 19 young people were reported as already being homeless, based on their current accommodation. When cases were opened, 118 young people were being threatened with homelessness from their parental/ family home, whilst 15 were threatened with homelessness from a friend’s home.

It was not possible to find out whether a homelessness application was taken when the young person approached the Drop In Service and, if so, if a prevention outcome (whether positive or not) was recorded by both Roundabout and the local authority. This is important, because it would

reveal any double counting, helping Sheffield City Council to come to a view about whether more synchronised working would improve their future levels of positive prevention outcomes.

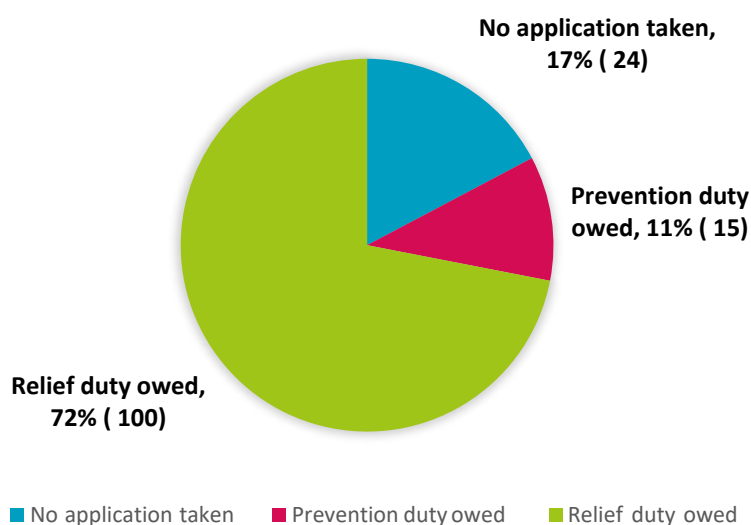
As set out above in Table 34, the total number of preventions recorded by Sheffield City Council where accommodation was secured for at least 6 months was 282 households, of all ages and types. This is a low number, due to the low proportion of applications taken per 1000 of the population, and low also in terms of prevention 'success' rate when compared to the regional and national positions.

Based on the difference between the 2 sets of recorded outcomes from Roundabout and Sheffield City Council, it is not unreasonable to assume that the majority of young people that were seen by Roundabout and not placed into supported housing as an outcome were prevention cases where no homelessness application had been taken. Evidence for this is the overall numbers for Sheffield City Council in terms of accommodation outcomes and the type of outcome secured: only 10% or 28 people or households of all ages stayed with family or friends compared to 43%, or 125 young people with Roundabout; a further 65 people or 23% were placed by Sheffield City Council as a prevention option into supported housing. In Table 36 below, only 5% , or 11 of the young people who were placed into supported housing through a Roundabout referral were known to be prevention cases, with 72% being already homeless and therefore 'relief' cases. Other preventions for the City Council in 2019/20 related in the main to negotiation with landlords to avoid eviction, whereas Roundabout did not report any outcomes of this sort.

It is arguably timely to look at a close alignment of processes and data collection, so that the high rates of prevention success and the overall numbers of young people being seen by Roundabout are recorded as statutory homelessness cases where the 56 day threshold is met.

The picture is very different, however, at the point at which a young person accesses supported housing via the local authority's Supported Housing Pathway, where a homelessness application is usually taken. Cross-referencing was undertaken between the two sets of data relating to 139 young people in 2019/20 who accessed supported housing through a Drop In Service referral to the Council's supported housing pathway:

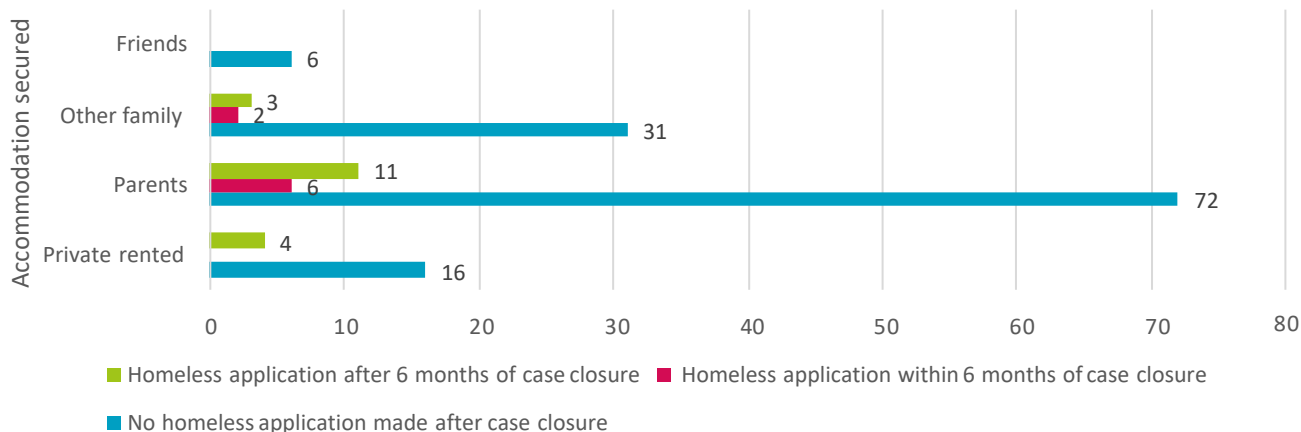
TABLE 36: YOUNG PEOPLE ENTERING SUPPORTED HOUSING VIA A DROP IN SERVICE REFERRAL AND HOMELESSNESS APPLICATIONS 2019/20



Repeat homelessness is an interesting statistic to look at, especially for young people. If there are several episodes of homelessness at a young age, there is a significantly heightened risk of rough sleeping at a later age, as available options run out with each attempt to resolve homelessness. We were able to match the 151 young people who either remained or returned to the parental or family home, stayed with friends, or moved into the private rented sector against homelessness applications after the closing of the case with the Drop In Service. Based on this analysis, 17.7% took out a homelessness application after the closure of the case with Roundabout. 12.7% were over six months later and 5% were within six months of the case closure.

There is no available local authority reporting on repeat homelessness except where an applicant has had repeat homelessness noted as a support need. In Sheffield in 2019/20, this was the case for 24.3% of all people owed a prevention or a relief duty.

Table 37: Homelessness applications made to Sheffield City Council after case closure with the Drop In Service from 2019/20



4.7 The Drop In Service progress towards the National Lottery outcomes and target measures

The target set by Roundabout was that by the end of the five years of funding in June 2021, 450 young people per year would be able to access secure accommodation, including advice and assistance to stay within the family home. There was an assumption that there would be an incremental increase in numbers over the five-year period. This was, in effect a stretch target, although no annual figures were set to measure progress towards the 450 figure in the final year. Please note that Year 5 does not represent a full 12 months as at the time of drafting this report in March 2021 the figures available were for the first 3 quarters only, up to the end of March 2021.

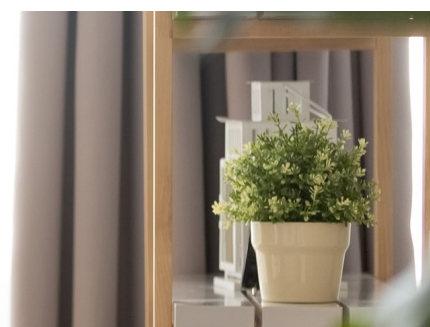


Table 38: Numbers of young people accessing the Drop In Service

Reaching Communities funding year (July-June)	Total of young people aged 16-25 accessing the drop in service	Accommodation secured through advice only	Accommodation secured through assistance to access services	No clear outcome yet	Total assisted (completed/ closed and ongoing)
Year 1 2016-17	153				
Year 2 2017-18	460	67	348	8	423
Year 3 2018-19	519	71	411	27	509
Year 4 2019-20	456	66	352	32	450
Year 5 2020-21 (part year until end of March 2021)	291	67	201	11	279

At the point of submitting the National Lottery bid for Reaching Communities funding, Roundabout could not have foreseen the change in the homelessness legislation, which aimed to help more single people earlier, or a global pandemic. The impact of these factors on the numbers is not clear, however it is possible to say, based on Table 38 and Table 39, that Roundabout was progressing steadily towards the target of 450 young people per year being assisted in Years 1, 2 and 3 of the funding. The impact of the new homelessness legislation, which commenced in April 2018, does not appear to have had any impact on the numbers seeking assistance. This is despite the next national lockdown which was in place during January - March 2021.

Table 39 shows that the numbers accessing the Drop In reduced the first 9 months of Covid-19 restrictions but this did not continue into 2021, with young people accessing the service at a 'business as usual' level from January. Young people had found the alternatives to a face to face visit to the Drop In Service easy to find and to access. There is significant learning in this for the future.

Table 39: Numbers accessing the Drop In Service quarterly in Years 3, 4 and 5 of the funding:

	Q1 (July-Sept)	Q2 (Oct-Dec)	Q3 (Jan-March)	Q4 (April-June)	Total numbers
Year 3 (July 18-June 19)	126	114	126	153	519
Year 4 (July 19-June 20)	147	119	115	75	456
Year 5 (July 20-March 21)	81	97	113	Not available	291

There is likely to have been an impact on numbers due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Year 4 had a significantly reduced number of young people seeking assistance in Quarter 4 and this is likely to be directly attributed to the impact of the Covid-19 lockdown restrictions between March – June 2020 of that year. This continued into the first quarter of Year 5. However, by Quarter 3 of Year 5 the numbers were not significantly different to 'business as usual' numbers in Years 3 and 4.

4.8 Sampling of young people's journeys through the Drop In Service

We looked at basic case details of 12 young people who had accessed the Drop In Service. The outlines of these are provided in Appendix Five. The purpose of these was to find out a little more about the profiles of the young people, including any known adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), their routes through services, and the roles played by the different parts of the Homeless Prevention Service and other agencies.

Whilst the cases provided are not representative (as the sampling was not random), they aim to show the variety of circumstances young people present with at the Drop In Service. A large proportion of the work is supporting young people who are already homeless, as well as those who are threatened with homelessness, and this is evidenced through the cases selected. Based on this group of 12 young people, their profiles showed that:

- 8 were already homeless, with 3 rough sleeping and 4 sofa-surfing.
- At least 4 had been homeless before at least once.
- 3 young people were care leavers.
- 1 was a pregnant young woman, with some safeguarding concerns.
- 3 young people were LGBT+.
- 8 young people had mental health issues.
- 3 had an offending background, for 2 young people this involved time in custody.
- 4 had substance misuse issues.
- 7 had recorded ACEs. There were 3 other young people where these were not recorded, but based on their support needs and other information around their case, it is likely that there would be at least one or more ACE.

Factors with their immediate situations showed that:

- Causes of homelessness included leaving custody, fleeing gang related violence, eviction from supported housing, homophobic bullying, sexual abuse, domestic abuse and parental exclusion/eviction.
- 10 were supported to make homelessness applications to the Council. The 2 which did not make applications were prevention cases.
- 9 of the homeless applications led to statutory duties being owed. The one exception to this was a young man with no recourse to public funds who was not eligible.

In terms of outcomes, the Drop In Service took actions to support young people to either prevent or relieve their homelessness. This involved internal work between the component parts of the Homeless Prevention Service as well as with partner agencies: the Housing Solutions Service; Children's Services; the Probation Service and other provider agencies:

- 2 young people who had been rough sleeping moved in to accommodation within Roundabout's Rapid Rehousing scheme.
- The young person who was not eligible for support was assisted to find paid work through the Homeless Prevention Service Employment and Skills team, which changed his status in terms of access to public funds. He accessed Nightstop and Roundabout's own emergency housing.
- 1 young person remained at home with their parent, with 3 months of support from the Mediation Service.
- 2 young people accessed their own tenancies via the Homeless Prevention Service's Private Rented Access scheme.
- 2 of the 4 young people who were aged 16 or 17 became looked after due to homelessness.
- 1 young person moved into the Future Builders accommodation which is part of the Homeless Prevention Service.
- 3 young people accessed supported housing options via the Council's Supported Housing Pathway.

The resolutions involved partnership working in most instances, but it is useful to note that 7 of the 12 cases had an outcome which was achieved through Roundabout's own services. There are significant advantages for any local authority to have a wide range of options available through a single service point. For Sheffield, as a large city with no specialist youth homelessness service internally, the Drop In Service performs this role, often hand-in-hand with colleagues in the Housing Solutions Service or Children's Services. At times, the Drop In Service acts more independently of the local authority, because homelessness can be averted altogether by swift action, or through acting as an advocate or support for young people in their work with the local authority. See Appendix Four for examples of different models for delivery of youth homelessness services in larger cities.

4.9 Changes to the Drop In Service as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic

There have been significant changes to the way in which young people access the Drop In Service. The details of the almost complete switch from walking in to the use of telephone and other channels are set out in Tables 23 and 24 earlier in this section of the report and Table 39 shows the level of access pre-pandemic through to March 2021. The Homeless Prevention workers described getting more skilled in working with young people over the phone, listening for inflections in voices, encouraging, advising and reassuring young people. Constant contact via mobiles/text has provided some easy communication with young people:

"We will keep on with these communication channels in the future" A Homeless Prevention Worker

As well as the vast majority of contact being via telephone, there has been use of other technology, including chat boxes and texting. The two workers could see that it would be possible to have a proactive reach beyond Sheffield and into other areas of South Yorkshire using this more mixed model for contact, and noted that they are already taking calls from other local authority areas in South Yorkshire as a result. Given the skills, knowledge and experience that Roundabout has built up over several years now, it would be possible to offer the service more widely, as long as there was capacity to do so.

Throughout the entire pandemic, statutory homelessness services in England have consistently been under significant pressure. Whilst there have been very few evictions from tenancies due to the suspension of granting of possession notices, there has been a major focus on delivering 'Everyone In', assisting people off the streets and helping single people who are at high risk of rough sleeping. In addition, other types of homelessness – including domestic abuse and parental eviction – have continued and, in some areas, risen.

As a result of the pressures in Sheffield, the Drop In Service's Homeless Advice Workers both thought that there was an increased rate of referral from the City Council, which was welcomed by them:

"We wanted the Council to send over every 16 – 21-year-old to us and that is happening more now [since the Covid-19 pandemic]. Just in the last couple of weeks the pressures on the Housing Solutions Service mean young people are being sent through for advice and to the Mediation Service. Front line advisers in Howden House [the location of the Housing Solutions Service] will ask young people if they have spoken to Roundabout." Homeless Prevention Worker, the Drop In Service

As mentioned earlier in this section of the report, some changes have taken place to ease the waiting times for young people, through the use of a direct line to a duty Senior Housing Solutions Officer for all 16 – 25-year-olds. This has really made a difference to the ability to respond swiftly.

"Waiting times for the public number can be hours. Young people tend to give up". Homeless Prevention Worker, the Drop In Service

Not all aspects of the service have been made more straightforward by the pandemic, however. For example, where 16 and 17-year-olds are homeless or threatened with homelessness, the pandemic has made it more difficult for the Drop In staff to be part of an online or telephone joint assessment process, to support or advocate for young people if needed. Whilst a service based on telephone contact, texting, and chat boxes with some web-based meeting platforms like Facetime, Zoom or Teams might work well up to a point, most young people do report anecdotally that they would sometimes prefer face-to-face meetings with workers.

As is noted in the Peer Education Programme section, there is considerable learning regarding the offer of mediation and the different communication channels that might be used in addition to face-to-face meetings. Some parents are reported to be more likely to agree to mediation telephone discussions due to time pressures in their lives.

It is widely expected that homelessness will rise as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.³⁸ The way the Drop In Service works would benefit from a short review. This could help improve the data collection through case file recording. And the learning from the last year is important to pinpoint, through some discussion with young people as customers and through structured dialogue with local authorities.

38 See the Crisis Monitor 2021, Chapter 6: <https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/244702/crisis-england-monitor-2021.pdf>

Section 5: Understanding the impact of the Homeless Prevention Service

Homelessness is anticipated to rise due to the impact of Covid-19, meaning that local authorities and their partners will continue to be under significant pressure to assist households. The economic downturn, rising debt, high levels of youth unemployment, a backlog of possession orders going through the courts once the suspension of evictions has been lifted, and continued pressure on low income families all point towards increased youth homelessness. The unknown economic impact of Brexit also continues to create further uncertainty.

Because of their interconnectedness, and the way in which young people can access these services seamlessly, the Homeless Prevention Service components together provide a comprehensive prevention resource which is greater than the sum of its parts. They each have a specialist prevention focus, bringing added value individually and together, in terms of outcomes for young people and savings to the public purse.



It is challenging to estimate what would happen if the Peer Education Programme and the Drop In Service did not exist, or if the other services which together make up the Homeless Prevention Service were not available. Logic dictates that there is an impact of upstream prevention work which results in improved outcomes as well as financial savings to the public purse. Claims of significant returns on investment are justifiably subject to scrutiny, in terms of what would have happened anyway and what can reasonably be attributed to the work of a service. Other factors impact on the lives of young people and the way services are delivered. These add further layers of complexity to understanding any impact and attributing a 'cause and effect' judgment on numbers and outcomes. For example, in the case of the Homeless Prevention Service, there will have been an impact due to the Covid-19 pandemic from March 2020 onwards, and the change in the homelessness legislation from April 2018 onwards. Homelessness and the drivers which lead to this – poverty, destitution, the welfare safety net, and housing markets – are continually shifting.

The table below gives short scenarios which might be attributed to the work of either the Peer Education Programme or the Drop In Service, or both. No estimate of numbers is provided – just single examples. These do not intend to give a definitive picture of costs of homelessness and prevention. Included within the table are two examples of outcomes for the 53 peer educators, as they are a key group with specific outcomes in the National Lottery work, with 38% of them moving into employment and a further 30% going into education or training.

Not all successful interventions are necessarily cost-free, but they are cheaper than the crisis response. The undeniable human benefits of support services' intervention should not be overlooked or underestimated in the inevitable focus on budgets and monetary resources. The final example in the table below is of a young person who has been rough sleeping and sofa-surfing, whilst all the others are prevention cases. The savings to the public purse of these cases significantly outweigh the rough sleeping example. Nevertheless, services to the young person who was rough sleeping could lead to a transformation over time, in terms of quality of life: friends, health, work and housing. This change could well extend a young person's life by many years and may mean they begin to contribute to the public purse.

The unit costings are all from the Greater Manchester Combined Authority unit costs database, and are national ones, rather than specific to any South Yorkshire local authority or other costing.³⁹ See Appendix Six for a list of these which relate to young people and homelessness.

Table 40: Scenarios of 8 young people with costings/savings related to youth homelessness prevention and relief work

Services provided and cost per annum	Service numbers in 2018/19	Young person (YP) scenarios	Non-cashable cost/saving (This reduces pressure on a service, saving money in future budgeting periods)	Fiscal cost/saving and where costs/savings fall (This is a cash saving realised within a public sector budget)	Economic benefits (This is a benefit which is experienced by the young person)
Peer Education Programme. The budget for running the service is £35,960 – Reaching Communities funding	Via Peer Education Programme 2,866 students/ young people attended sessions 48 peer educators trained	1 YP aged 16/17 who attended a Peer Education session in Year 10 resolves a breakdown in relationship and threat of homelessness, with no need for statutory intervention or contact with Roundabout. She talks to her 6th form tutor and then to her mother and agree some ground rules for living together.	No homelessness assessment: £530 saving to Housing Solutions Service No Child-in-Need assessment and no 6-month follow up support £1,701 saving to Children's Services	n/a	n/a
Drop In Service. The budget for running the service is £35,960 – Reaching Communities funding	Via the Drop In Service 521 young people				
And					

39 See: <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/research/research-cost-benefit-analysis/>

£29,061 for Mediation Service work based within the Drop In, funded by Sheffield City Council, People Commissioning		1 YP aged 18 attends a Peer Education session in Sheffield College. He is then referred via the College Pastoral Service to the Drop In Service. He is concerned about having to move out from his aunt's house. He needs advice and help via the Mediation Service and the Private Rented Access Service. Following his visit, he needs no further assistance and plans a move with help from Roundabout	No homelessness assessment: £530 saving to Housing Solutions Service No supported housing for 12 months £11,024 saving to Commissioning		n/a
		1 YP aged 16/17 contacts the Drop In Service due to worries about arguments with parents and threat of homelessness in the future. He knows about the Service from a Peer Education assembly in Year 9. He has 4 mediation sessions with his parents and needs no further assistance	No homelessness assessment: £530 saving to Housing Solutions Service No Child-in-Need assessment and no 6-month follow up support £1,701 saving to Children's Services	No looked after child placement, 12 months £56,510 and no care leaver duties for 3 years minimum at £6,250 per year saving to Children's Services Or No supported housing for 12 months £11,024 saving to Commissioning (NB this is a non-cashable saving) No claim for housing benefit £5,200 from DWP	n/a
		1 YP aged 16/17 contacts the Drop In Service at risk of parental eviction. She heard about the Drop In from a friend. She has a planned move when she is 17 into supported housing and also gets help from Roundabout to get back into college	No homelessness assessment: £530 No Child-in-Need assessment and no 6-month follow up support £1,701	No looked after child placement, 12 months £56,510 plus no care leaver duties for 3 years minimum at £6,250 per year (saving to Children's Services) BUT	£10,466 per annum benefit to the young person who is no longer NEET

				<p>A cost of supported housing for 12 months £11,024 (Commissioning) (NB this is a non-cashable saving)</p> <p>A claim for housing benefit £5,200 and income support: £6,168 per annum cost – both costs to DWP and some to HMRC as loss of tax and NI income</p>	
		<p>1 YP aged 20 contacts the Drop In Service at risk of homelessness from his friend's (his friend has a new partner). He returns to a family member's home following mediation for 3 months. He is assisted to enter into employment by Roundabout and then moves into a Future Builder's property</p>	<p>No homelessness assessment: saving of £530 to the Housing Solutions Service</p> <p>No supported housing for 12 months £11,024 saving to Commissioning</p>	<p>£13,139 saving per annum to DWP as UC /JSA and housing costs and to HMRC as tax and NI contributions</p>	<p>£18,084 per annum benefit to the young person due to employment</p>
		<p>1 YP aged 21 contacts the Drop In Service, they have been sofa-surfing and rough sleeping for 2 years and then have a planned move to Roundabout's Rapid Rehousing. He has a range of support needs, including offending, substance misuse and mental health</p>	<p>Homelessness assessment: £530 – a cost to Housing Solutions Service</p> <p>Moves to Rapid Rehousing for 12 months – at a cost of £11,024 to Commissioning for support</p>	<p>A cost of £5,200 to DWP for housing costs</p> <p>A cost of £6,158 to DWP for Income Support</p> <p>There is a saving per annum for assisting a rough sleeper into accommodation and support, which is not easy to pinpoint, but could be between £9, 189 and £24,541, dependent on the level of needs they have. These savings would be apportioned between Health, criminal justice and local authority budgets</p>	

		1 Peer Educator gains employment for 12 months. He attributes this to gaining of skills and confidence through being a Peer Educator for the last 14 months	n/a	£13,139 saving per annum (to DWP as UC /JSA and housing costs and HMRC as tax and NI income)	£18,084 per annum benefit to the young person due to employment
		1 Peer Educator enters further education or training for 12 months. She had dropped out of college but resolved to reapply when her confidence levels had improved	n/a	£6,168 per annum cost to DWP, as Income Support and HMRC as loss of tax and NI income	£10,466 per annum benefit to the young person who is no longer NEET

Roundabout would usually work with about 450 – 500 young people through the Drop In Service per year, reaching a further 2,800 per year through upstream peer education work. The table above is a conservative estimate of impacts of savings to a local authority based on just five cases of young people where homelessness was prevented in different ways. The saving, which is a mixture of cashable and non-cashable savings, to a local authority would exceed £86,000 – more than the cost of the National Lottery funding per annum. This is based on:

- Not taking and processing 5 homelessness applications, with prevention duties
- Not undertaking 3 child-in-need assessments, and 6 months of support through a child-in-need plan
- Not placing 2 young people into supported housing for 12 months each
- Not looking after 1 16/17-year-old who was homeless for 1 year

As noted above, in some instances a homelessness application should be triggered and any saving on assessments, which being realised currently, is not necessarily positive at a strategic level, as these young people are not being represented in homelessness statistics locally or nationally as a result, although their outcomes are positive.

In terms of estimating the approximate number of prevention cases which can be attributed to the work funded through the National Lottery, the starting point was that Roundabout helped 151 young people secure accommodation in 2019/20 through staying in the family home, with friends, or by moving into the private rented sector. If these young people had approached any local authority and were eligible, they are very likely to have been owed a prevention duty on the basis that they were threatened with homelessness within 56 days. Therefore we concluded that at least 66%, or 100 of these cases were prevention cases. This is a cautious estimate, given the low threshold which triggers a prevention duty being owed, and our view is that the numbers are likely to be higher than this.

This does not include young people who did not need more 'hands on' help but managed to resolve their own difficulties with some advice or simply through attending a Peer Education session and talking to a teacher. In the table above, the five cases of prevention success and their costs suggest that, given all the other considerations and unknowns, the likely return on investment is significant.

Section 6: Conclusion and recommendations

In 2015, when Roundabout submitted a proposal to the Reaching Communities programme, there was already some early learning and a platform to build on, for both the Peer Education Programme and the Drop In Service. Over the last five years, based on information from the work on the ground with young people, there is strong evidence indicating that the ambitions expressed in the original proposal were realised. It is possible to assert with confidence that the outcomes have been met and almost all of the targets were reached, despite a year of service interruption and change as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Large numbers of students at school and in college each year have had high quality peer education sessions, and this is likely to have fed through into referrals for mediation and visits or contact with the Drop In Service. When young people are at risk of homelessness, or already homeless, Roundabout find solutions, often within their own services but also through close working with Sheffield City Council. In 2019/20, 74% of young people who needed help had the threat of homelessness prevented or actual homelessness resolved. A further 22% were offered emergency accommodation.

Changes, like a global pandemic or a significant change in the homelessness legislation, are factors far outside the control of Roundabout. These have, however, brought unexpected learning and new opportunities as well as some challenges. Since March 2020 and the first national lockdown, new ways to reach and work with young people and parents have been offered and these have been more successful than expected. The pressured situation of the last year has helped to strengthen the partnership with Sheffield City Council, with greater flexibility, increased referrals and faster communication being features of this positive change. These shifts, combined with the change to the legislation which places homelessness prevention on a statutory footing, could help to cement further the relationship with Sheffield City Council as well as extend the current reach of prevention services through closer work with other local authorities in South Yorkshire.

The school and college-based peer education work has been severely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, and whilst alternatives are being developed, in terms of online sessions, there is a view from teachers and peer educators that the physical presence of the peer educators in a classroom remains the best delivery model. Testing out new ways of working will need to part of the process of any adaptations to the current Programme.

The reasons two targets were not reached provides some learning to any agency on setting of performance indicators and targets: were the data collection systems in place understood by everyone who needed to contribute to information gathering? And were the targets tested out to make sure they were not overly ambitious, even though there was no obvious baseline against which to set or test them?

Despite this, and the absence of a longitudinal study, the outcome evidence set out in this report logically points to the agreed outcomes being achieved and providing not only a significant return on investment but added value. Effective, high-performing youth homelessness services need a suite of prevention tools which do not just put an emergency roof over a young person's head, but add value through helping them with their transition into adulthood – employment, education, training, restoring of important relationships with family and somewhere safe and affordable to call home. The provision of this through the Homeless Prevention Service keeps young people away from the cycle of repeat homelessness, avoiding future risks of rough sleeping for some.

Planning is underway to protect local communities from the worst impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic in South Yorkshire. Homelessness – including youth homelessness – will remain a concern given the backdrop of economic uncertainty, youth unemployment and continued housing pressures. The only way to address this in a strategic way, which keeps young people away from repeat homelessness and potentially rough sleeping, is partnership working and a focus on prevention work.

Knowing what works to prevent youth homelessness is more important now than at any other moment in the last decade. The benefits of the work of the Homeless Prevention Service run the risk of going unnoticed by commissioners and decision makers locally. This may, somewhat perversely, be because the work is almost entirely funded through charitable grants and not through local authority commissioning. It may also be because Government's attention and funding is more focussed on resolving the ongoing homelessness crisis than on preventing it from happening in the first place. Quite simply, to address rough sleeping occurring later in life, local authorities and their partners have to address youth homelessness – and that means work on prevention.

The personal benefits to young people of avoiding homelessness and recovering from the experience should be viewed alongside the financial imperatives to resource prevention work. Listening to the Peer Educators and other young people about their journeys and the changes they have experienced is always a reminder and an inspiration for anyone working in the field of homelessness and services to vulnerable young people.

The learning from the Homeless Prevention Service in its entirety could be usefully considered in a wider strategic context by the four individual local authorities and South Yorkshire Combined Authority. Bringing this to the table as part of wider discussions and planning is critical, so that partnerships can form around a shared vision, a clear operating model and reporting systems, ensuring charitable donations, grants and public money can be used to best effect, preventing young people from becoming homeless.

Recommendations

1) Review Roundabout's casework management system in order to:

- make adjustments so it aligns with relevant parts of the H-CLIC system;
- ensure the system can collect all the data needed internally to track progress against targets.

2) Review the learning from the Covid-19 pandemic within Roundabout, in particular the effectiveness of on-line digital platforms and other alternatives to 'face to face' work as a means of reaching and communicating with young people and their families.

3) Request a meeting with Sheffield City Council to discuss:

- the shared learning from the Covid-19 pandemic around young people at risk of homelessness;
- future use of on-line digital platforms communication channels to reach young people in the future
- any changes to partnership working to support closer working arrangements;
- the possibilities of closer alignment of data collection and analysis.

4) Arrange individual meetings with other local authorities in South Yorkshire and the Combined Authority to discuss the learning from the Covid-19 pandemic, including on-line digital platforms communication channels to reach young people the work of the Drop In Service, and the other services within the Homeless Prevention Service.

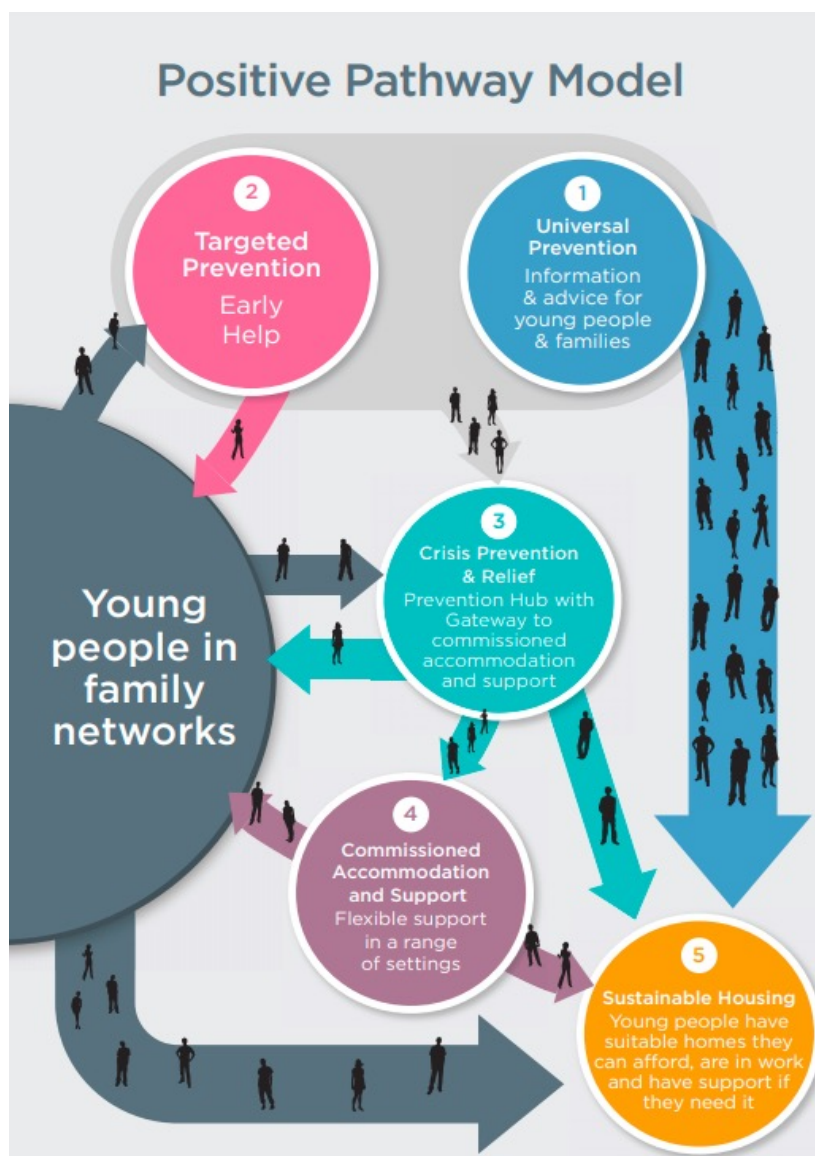
5) Consult with teachers before embarking on changes to the programme that would require them to deliver it.

6) Hold a meeting internally to discuss how to have more peer education sessions with young people in Years 10, 11, 12 and 13.

7) In order to try to reduce repeat homelessness, build into the Homeless Prevention Service some follow up calls for the first six to nine months with young people whose homelessness has been prevented through a return home/to family or friends.



Appendix One: The Positive Pathway model



Appendix Two:

Taken from the MHCLG annual rough sleeping count or estimate, which provides a 'snapshot' of rough sleeping on any given night.

		Rough Sleeping Numbers					
	Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
England	Total	3,569	4,134	4,751	4,677	4,266	2,688
	U 18	-	-	3 (0.06%)	1 (0.02%)	6 (0.14%)	1 (0.04%)
	18-25	-	-	366 (7.7%)	296 (6.33%)	201 (4.71%)	138 (5.1%)
	Not Known	-	-	536 (11.28%)	639 (13.62%)	517 (12.12%)	200 (7.4%)
Yorkshire and the Humber	Total	160	172	207	246	242	181
	U 18	-	-	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
	18-25	-	-	13 (6.3%)	12 (4.9%)	12 (5%)	7 (3.9%)
	Not Known	-	-	12 (5.8%)	9 (3.7%)	23 (9.5%)	13 (7.2%)
Barnsley	Total	9	2	0	17	2	10
	U 18	-	-	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
	18-25	-	-	0 (0%)	2 (11.8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
	Not Known	-	-	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Doncaster	Total	9	13	8	27	24	13
	U 18	-	-	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
	18-25	-	-	2 (25%)	3 (11.1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
	Not Known	-	-	1 (12.5%)	0 (0%)	7 (29.2%)	1 (7.7%)
Rotherham	Total	3	6	2	5	10	6
	U 18	-	-	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
	18-25	-	-	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
	Not Known	-	-	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Sheffield	Total	11	15	20	26	29	24
	U 18	-	-	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
	18-25	-	-	0 (0%)	0 (0%)		0 (0%)



Appendix Three:

The table below show some other factors which may play into the differences between large city council unitary authorities. One of the major determinants is the housing market, in terms of availability of social housing and affordability of the private rented sector for young people. There is some local and sub-regional information on this in Section 2.4 of the report.

Area	2019 Indices of Multiple Deprivation – Rank of Average Rank	Households Assessed as Threatened with Homelessness per 000s	Households Assessed as Homeless per 000s	Percentage (and Number) of Homelessness Duties Owed to 16–25 Year-Olds*	Percentage (and Number) of Population Aged 16-25 from 2019 ONS Mid-year Population Estimates
Birmingham	6	4.88	10.47	13.9% (907)	16.6% (189,965)
Bristol	82	2.99	7.69	16.5% (345)	17.9% (83,021)
Leeds	92	15.26	4.07	25.5% (1,642)	16.7% (132,634)
Liverpool	4	3.62	5.49	16.5% (335)	17.4% (86,760)
Manchester	2	10.57	13.40	22.6% (1,175)	19.9% (110,027)
Nottingham	10	8.98	12.00	23.3% (638)	
Sheffield	93	2.94	10.77 13.9% (907)	24.2% (812)	17.4% (101,573)

***This figure includes single people and all households with children where the main applicant is aged under 25. All households with dependent children have a priority need for accommodation.**

Appendix Four:

Examples of different models for delivery of youth homelessness services in some cities, as known in 2021

The service for young people before the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (HRA)	Changes in operational delivery model as a result of the HRA	Example of an authority area
Young people access in-house homelessness services in the same way as all other households. They can choose to visit/use any other local voluntary advice/support service for young people. Other agencies /services form part of the wider partnership	None except general HRA changes	Sheffield Nottingham
Young people access in house homelessness services in the same way as all other households and can choose to visit/use any other local voluntary advice/support service for young people. Other agencies / services form part of the wider partnership	New service set up specifically for young people, with Housing, Children's Services, voluntary agency(s) and other public sector agencies working together in one building	Bristol
Young people access help via a specialist in-house service if they are at risk of homelessness (Housing and Children's Services working together). Other agencies / services form part of the wider partnership	None, except general HRA changes	Hull
Young people access help via a specialist service, led by a voluntary agency working together with Housing and Children's Services in the same building. Other agencies/services form part of the wider partnership	Decision made that the voluntary agency would be contracted to provide the statutory homelessness service to young people	Birmingham
Young people access help via specialist youth services, led by voluntary agencies, working closely with Housing and Children's Services with some delivery taking place in the same building(s). Other agencies/ services form part of the wider partnership	Some changes are made to clarify and adjust working arrangements and the statutory function remains with the local authority	Manchester

Appendix Five:

Summaries from the Drop In Service of 12 young people's homelessness journeys

Young person A	Case outline
Profile	<p>19-year-old woman; Mixed heritage, White and Black Caribbean; Heterosexual,</p> <p>Previously a looked after child, now a care leaver.</p> <p>Adverse childhood experiences: Child sexual exploitation, substance misuse, reported missing/running away, exclusion/non-attendance at school</p> <p>12 previous episodes of homelessness, from the age of 19</p>
Cause of threat of homelessness	Eviction from supported housing
Accommodation at time of contact with Drop In Service	Hostel (Roundabout emergency accommodation)
Support needs	Domestic abuse; Sexual exploitation; offending, care leaver; alcohol and substance misuse, mental health issues
Homelessness duties owed?	<p>Relief duty owed</p> <p>Priority need status (care leaver)</p>
Assistance from Council	Accommodation offered in alternative supported housing
Assistance from Homeless Prevention Service	<p>Help to make a homelessness application</p> <p>Advice on housing options</p> <p>On-going support</p>
Other notes:	

Young person B	Case outline
Profile	<p>24-year-old male, White British, heterosexual, disability</p> <p>Previously a looked after child, now a care leaver</p> <p>Adverse childhood experiences: not recorded</p> <p>2 previous episodes of homelessness</p>
Cause of threat of homelessness	Leaving custody with no accommodation on release
Accommodation at time of contact with Drop In Service	Rough sleeping for 2 years
Support needs	Mental health; physical health; offending; care leaver 22-25; substance misuse
Homelessness duties owed?	Relief duty owed
Assistance from Council	Accommodation offered in alternative supported housing
Assistance from Homeless Prevention Service	<p>Help to make a homelessness application</p> <p>Referred YP to Rapid Re-Housing</p>
Known outcome :	Since entering accommodation with support through Roundabout's Rapid Rehousing scheme with high levels of support he has sustained a tenancy and not re-offended (2 years ago)
Other notes:	Several instances of being in custody whilst younger

Young person C	Case outline
Profile	<p>17-year-old female, White British, lesbian</p> <p>Adverse childhood experiences: Emotional abuse; neglect; sexual abuse; parental separation, domestic abuse</p> <p>No previous episodes of homelessness</p>
Cause of threat of homelessness	Fleeing domestic and sexual abuse
Accommodation at time of contact with Drop In Service	Parental home
Support needs	Mental health; domestic abuse; sexual exploitation; homeless 16/17 year old
Homelessness duties owed?	Application taken but decision was to become a looked after child
Assistance from Council	Section 20 accommodation offered under Children Act 1989
Assistance from Homeless Prevention Service	Joint assessment with Children's Services
Known outcome :	The young person is now at university
Other notes:	

Young person D	Case outline
Profile	19-year-old female white British, heterosexual, disability Adverse childhood experiences: 3 previous episodes of homelessness, starting from age 18
Cause of threat of homelessness	Parental eviction
Accommodation at time of contact with Drop In Service	Rough sleeping
Support needs	Mental health; domestic abuse; sexual exploitation; offending; substance misuse
Homelessness duties owed?	Relief duty owed
Assistance from Council	Placed into supported housing
Assistance from Homeless Prevention Service	Referral into Roundabout's Rapid Rehousing scheme – accepted
Known outcome :	Now living in her own tenancy a self-contained flat
Other notes:	

Young person E	Case outline
Profile	20-year-old male, Roma Slovakian, gay Adverse childhood experiences: not known 8 episodes of homelessness, starting from age 19
Cause of threat of homelessness	No recourse to public funds
Accommodation at time of contact with Drop In Service	Sofa-surfing
Support needs	Mental health; domestic abuse; sexual exploitation; offending; substance misuse
Homelessness duties owed?	Application made but not eligible – NRPF
Assistance from Council	None
Assistance from Homeless Prevention Service	Support to seek work Sourced emergency accommodation via Nightstop and B&Bs Placed into Roundabout's emergency supported housing once he had begun to work
Known outcome :	Young person no longer subject to immigration control as exercising his treaty rights re employment - and so eligible for support Suitably housed
Other notes:	

Young person F

Case outline

Profile	<p>20-year-old male, Asian British, heterosexual.</p> <p>Previously a looked after child and now a care leaver aged 18 – 20</p> <p>Adverse childhood experiences: not known</p> <p>Unknown if any previous episodes of homelessness</p>
Cause of threat of homelessness	Fleeing gang related violence
Accommodation at time of contact with Drop In Service	Sofa-surfing
Support needs	<p>Care leaver aged 18 – 20</p> <p>Offending</p> <p>Violence</p>
Homelessness duties owed?	Relief duty owed and priority need (care leaver)
Assistance from Council	Placed into Roundabout emergency accommodation
Assistance from Homeless Prevention Service	<p>Liaised with Probation, Children's Social Care and Housing Solutions Service</p> <p>Supported to make a homelessness application</p>
Known outcome :	<p>Accommodation in short stay/emergency accommodation</p> <p>Averted risk of a return to custody for breach of licence conditions</p> <p>Reduced risk of offending</p>
Other notes:	



Young person G	Case outline
Profile	18-year-old male, White British, heterosexual Adverse childhood experiences: not known First episode of homelessness
Cause of threat of homelessness	Parental eviction
Accommodation at time of contact with Drop In Service	Rough sleeping
Support needs	Independent living skills
Homelessness duties owed?	No – if notes are correct – an unlawful decision to refuse an application as the YP was in employment
Assistance from Council	None
Assistance from Homeless Prevention Service	Referral from Drop In to the Roundabout Private Rented service Tenancy support provided to maintain his accommodation
Known outcome :	Tenancy in the private rented sector
Other notes:	

Young person H	Case outline
Profile	18-year-old female, White British Adverse childhood experiences: domestic and physical abuse in household; mental health in household; emotional abuse in household Parental eviction 2 years prior to approaching Roundabout, living at family friends
Cause of threat of homelessness	Parental eviction
Accommodation at time of contact with Drop In Service	Sofa-surfing
Support needs	Mental health; domestic abuse
Homelessness duties owed?	Relief duty owed
Assistance from Council	Referral to supported accommodation
Assistance from Homeless Prevention Service	Supported to access: Roundabout emergency accommodation Mental health services Longer term tenancy And support from Roundabout to acquire independent living skills
Known outcome :	Own tenancy; access to mental health services
Other notes:	

Young person I	Case outline
Profile	19-year-old female, White British, heterosexual Adverse childhood experiences: Substance misuse in household; neglect
Cause of threat of homelessness	Safeguarding issue 26 weeks pregnant – concerns from midwife that she could not remain in family home due to ongoing safeguarding issues
Accommodation at time of contact with Drop In Service	Sofa-surfing
Support needs	Pregnant
Homelessness duties owed?	No application made
Assistance from Council	Referral from Social Care – no contact with Housing Solutions Service
Assistance from Homeless Prevention Service	Referral to resettlement Team in Roundabout
Known outcome :	Accessed private rented accommodation via Roundabout
Other notes:	

Young person J	Case outline
Profile	16-year-old male, White British heterosexual, disabled (mental health) Adverse childhood experiences: Parental separation, alcohol abuse within the household Not been homeless before
Cause of threat of homelessness	Parent no longer willing or able to accommodate
Accommodation at time of contact with Drop In Service	With father
Support needs	Mental Health
Homelessness duties owed?	Application taken, but decision to become a looked after child
Assistance from Council	Section 20 accommodation offered under Children Act 1989
Assistance from Homeless Prevention Service	Support to attend the joint assessment meeting Support through Mediation Service Lived in Roundabout's 24 hour supported accommodation for 6 months and then into Roundabout semi-independent accommodation
Known outcome :	Sustaining own tenancy aged 18
Other notes:	

Young person K	Case outline
Profile	17-year-old male, White British, heterosexual Adverse childhood experiences: none reported Not been homeless before
Cause of threat of homelessness	Threat of parental eviction
Accommodation at time of contact with Drop In Service	With mother
Support needs	None reported
Homelessness duties owed?	Not contacted
Assistance from Council	n/a
Assistance from Homeless Prevention Service	Mediation Service - 3 month involvement
Known outcome :	Young person remained with parent
Other notes:	

Young person L	Case outline
Profile	17-year-old male, Asian British, gay
Cause of threat of homelessness	Family no longer willing or able to accommodate, due to his sexuality
Accommodation at time of contact with Drop In Service	With parents
Support needs	Mental Health
Homelessness duties owed?	Yes – priority need as aged 17
Assistance from Council	Referred to Roundabout by the housing social worker for 16/17 year olds
Assistance from Homeless Prevention Service	Housed in the Future Builders Project Had to leave this project as he ceased working due to health issues
Known outcome :	Re-housed in other accommodation
Other notes:	

Appendix Six:

Examples of unit costings in relation to homelessness and young people

Description of the service	Unit cost of service and source of cost	Length of time of cost	Other information
Processing of 1 statutory homelessness application Any young person aged 16 – 25	£530 MHCLG new burdens assessment for prevention or relief duty	Up to 56 days	Experts believe this to be an underestimation of true costs of processing an application, which includes making enquiries into homelessness and an assessment of needs and provision of prevention or relief support
Child-in-Need support Only for homeless 16/17-year-olds	£1,701 GMCA Unit costs database ⁴⁰	6 months	An uprated cost from original 2008/9 research for DCSF
Looked after children support Applies only to homeless 16/17-year-olds who become looked after under S.20 of the Children Act 1989	£56,510 GMCA Unit costs database 2018/19	12 months	Average cost across all placement types for 2018/19
Supporting a care leaver Only for homeless 16/17-year-olds who then become looked after and are eligible for leaving care support:	£6,250 National Audit Office 2015	12 months	This should be treated with some caution as costs provided by Councils to Dept for Education ranged from an estimated £300 to £20,000. Support is provided up to the age of 21 and can continue until 25 if the young person requests this
Placed into Temporary Accommodation under a homelessness duty Under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 Any young person aged 16 – 25	£125 GMCA Unit costs database 2018/19	Weekly	Costs of TA vary depending on the type and the local housing market. Many homeless young people are not placed into TA, as there is usually minimal support attached, but placed into supported housing
Accommodated in supported housing As a prevention or relief option under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 Any young person aged 16 – 25	£212 GMCA Unit costs database 2018/19	Weekly	This is support costs only, it does not include any housing costs, which are a DWP cost and are usually claimed through housing benefit at an 'enhanced' level.
Support for a rough sleeper	£9,189 GMCA Unit costs database 2018/19	12 months	This is illustrative only. It does not include any costs of statutory homelessness. Costs are spread across a number of agencies and services.
Support for a rough sleeper with severe and multiple disadvantage (SMD)	£24,541 GMCA Unit costs database 2018/19	12 months	This should be treated with some caution. It is based on a range of costs across different public sector agencies, not only local authorities, including Health (physical and mental health), criminal justice, substance misuse and DWP costs

⁴⁰ Taken from the Greater Manchester Unit Costs database, which provides national unit costings for different public sector services