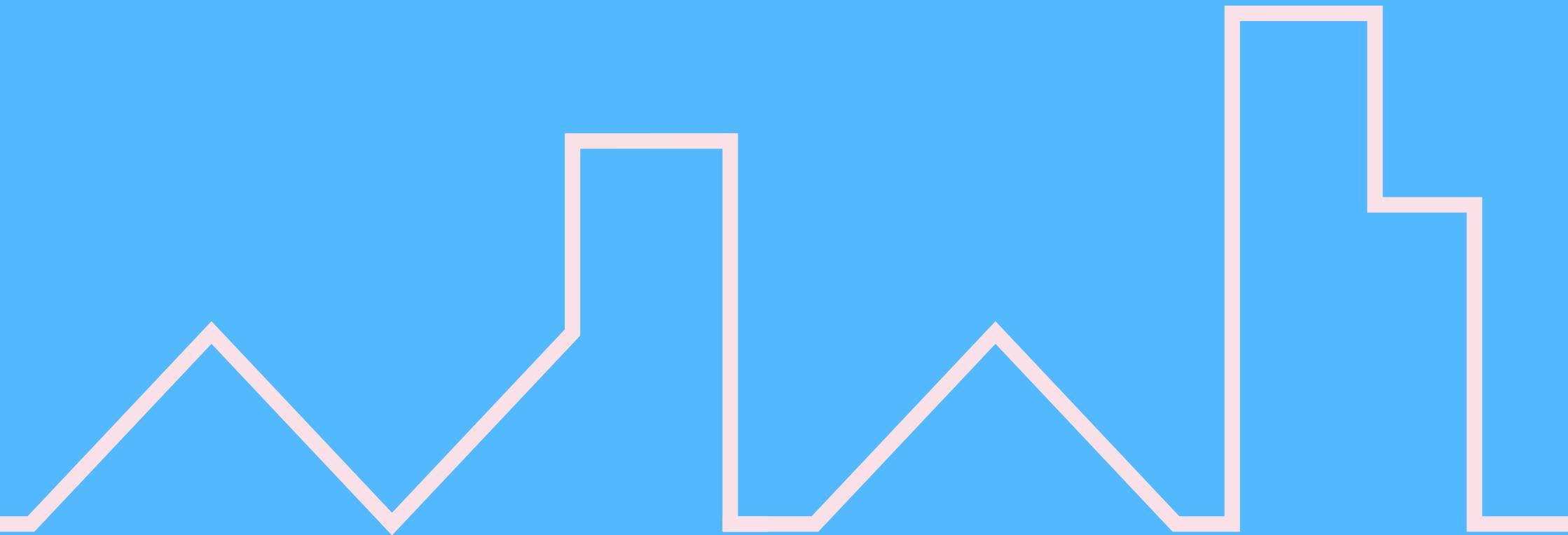


local action plan



homewards
bournemouth,
christchurch and poole



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Executive summary



Homewards is...

A five-year, locally led programme, launched by Prince William and The Royal Foundation of The Prince and Princess of Wales in June 2023.

The aim of Homewards is...

To demonstrate that together, it is possible to end homelessness – making it rare, brief, and unrepeatable.

Homewards will do this by...

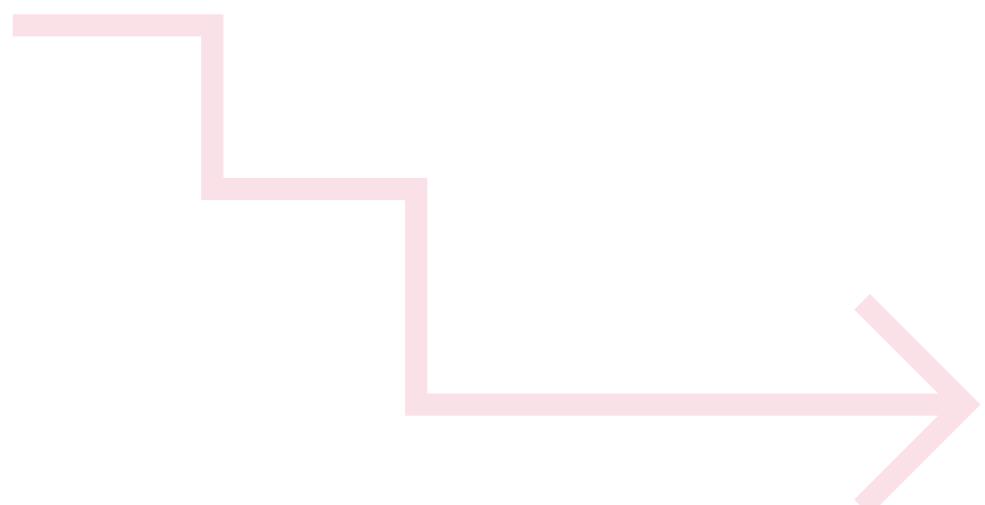
Preventing homelessness for at risk groups, whilst challenging stigma, inspiring optimism and ensuring this work is sustainable and replicable.

The six Homewards flagship locations are:



Success looks like...

- Each flagship location will be on a trajectory to end homelessness for target groups – making it rare, brief and unrepeated,
- The flagship locations will have an increased focus on sustainable prevention and collaboration,
- Communities will feel optimistic that it is possible to end homelessness and will recognise that it is beneficial to do so,
- The impact of Homewards will reach beyond the six flagship locations, with learnings being used to adopt tried and tested models in other areas.



Coalitions of organisations and people, from the public, private and voluntary sectors – have come together across the six flagship locations, committed to demonstrating that it's possible to end homelessness.

Each local Coalition has created its own Local Action Plan. They're delivering initiatives to support at-risk groups, identified by each location, where Homewards can help most.

Each Local Action Plan encompasses solutions. From housing to data to employment – and aims to make the prevention of homelessness 'business as usual'.

The Homewards Partnership, brought together by The Royal Foundation, creates an unprecedented network of individuals and organisations – including top experts and leading homelessness organisations. It continues to support the Coalitions to deliver their Local Action Plans, and to galvanise national and international momentum.

‘By demonstrating what is working to prevent homelessness with these groups and across these key areas, Homewards will demonstrate it is possible to end homelessness, together.’

Homewards
National Expert Panel

All the Local Action Plans will be reviewed every year...

To reflect on progress and capture new opportunities. Activities in the Local Action Plans vary, from testing a new scalable pilot, to fundamentally changing how people in the location work together.

These are ambitious plans. As delivery progresses, some elements may need to be adjusted or updated, so the Local Action Plans are agile documents, growing alongside our Coalitions.

This ensures that the Local Action Plans remain focused on delivering tangible change, with maximum impact.



The Royal Foundation is supporting each of our six flagship locations to achieve this with...

Additional capacity

A Local Delivery Lead and project management support in each location.

Homewards fund

£500,000 in seed funding to back each Action Plan.

Expertise

Access to a cutting-edge network of global experts, business and more.

The Royal Foundation is also supporting our flagship locations, in the areas that we know are the most crucial to preventing homelessness, so that they can:

- **Unlock impactful projects,**
- **Build strategic partnerships,**
- **Establish sustainable connections,**
- **Harness data to prevent homelessness,**
- **Test new ways of improving access to homes, for those who need it the most,**
- **Create employment pathways,**
- **Unlock appropriate finance to support homelessness prevention.**



Homewards in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole: Executive Summary

By 2028, Homewards BCP will have demonstrably increased a sustainable focus on prevention and collaboration.

We will have delivered successful projects, or tested innovative approaches, that prevented our cohorts of focus from experiencing homelessness. Our local community will feel optimistic that it is possible to end homelessness and will recognise that it is beneficial to do so. The impact of Homewards will reach well beyond the six flagship locations.

By delivering this ambitious Local Action Plan, the BCP Coalition aims to reduce the number of young people presenting as homeless. This approach reflects places such as Finland who have already demonstrated that it is possible to end homelessness, through sustained, incremental reductions by focusing on specific cohorts.

Whilst reduction is critical, it is not the only way we will measure success. Our work with young people will embed prevention and will strengthen existing support pathways. This will enable long term, sustainable change – which means we are unlikely to be able to quantify the total impact by 2028. Since the beginning of the year, the Homewards BCP Coalition

This latest iteration of Homewards BCP's Action Plan sets out the actions we'll take over the next 12 months – and beyond. Our shared ambition: to demonstrate that it is possible, through collaboration and prevention, to end youth homelessness.

has made significant strides. Much of our initial Action Plan has now moved from vision to reality. Thanks to the commitment of our partners across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole, the majority of our agreed actions are now live – and actively delivering change on the ground.

In response to rising youth homelessness across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole, we undertook a strategic review. This mapping exercise allowed us to better understand the landscape of existing services and to identify gaps. It has laid a vital foundation for targeted action and has informed the development of a new Youth Homelessness Board, which launches this autumn. This Board will provide strategic oversight and will ensure that efforts to prevent – and respond to – youth homelessness are coordinated.

Data is central to our approach

We have embarked on a data insight project, exploring how to better identify young parents who are at risk of homelessness. Insights are due early in 2026. This work will be supported by a newly funded Early Intervention Navigator, who will lead targeted upstream interventions to reduce the number of families losing their homes.

To date, we have allocated nearly £165,000 from the Homewards Fund to support three key initiatives:

1. Completion of the strategic review and development of the Youth Homelessness Board
2. The Shelter-led early intervention pilot
3. Recruitment of the Early Intervention Navigator as part of our data insight work

This funding reflects our commitment to turn evidence into action

We have established a Community of Practice for Frontline Workers, with early sessions highlighting a strong appetite for cross-sector learning and systems thinking. In parallel, we have formed a cross-system working group to develop a Community of Practice for Co-production. This will ensure that lived experience remains central to our approach.

The year ahead offers a pivotal opportunity to deepen and scale our work. We will use data to identify risk earlier and to intervene sooner. We'll co-create new housing and service access models for young people. We'll build an employment support offer, tailored to the needs of young people.

We have much still to do. But we are building momentum and making a difference.

Thank you for your ongoing belief in this work and in the power of local partnership to drive lasting change. I'm looking forward to continuing this journey with you.



1. Early prevention

Local context

The number of young people (aged 16-24) experiencing homelessness in BCP is on the rise, with a 14% year-on-year increase in the first half of 2025. In that period, 264 young people were found to be homeless, or at risk of homelessness. The reasons include family breakdown, the increasing cost of living, being unable to afford a home and being unable to secure steady employment.

14%

BCP
**increase in young people
experiencing homelessness**

Additionally, 61% of young people presenting as homeless in 2024/25 were NEET.

This underlines the strong link between disengagement from education or work and housing vulnerability. These young people often face multiple, overlapping challenges, including:

- Low educational attainment
- Lack of work experience
- Limited support networks
- Complex personal circumstances (such as care experience or mental health issues)

This year, Homewards BCP commissioned EveryYouth to undertake a review of the support that's available for young people in our location. The research, funded by the Homewards Fund, considered the diverse range of backgrounds, circumstances and attributes of young people. It also established what data was being collected and how that data was being used.

Work has been undertaken to develop a Youth Homelessness Board. It will comprise of statutory organisation, and will include relevant subgroups. It will officially launch, with an independent chair, at the beginning of the year. This board will oversee the actions set out in the Homewards Action Plan.

What are we going to do over the next 12 months?

1.1 Develop a Youth Gateway to provide early support for young people

Rationale: Over more than 10 years, London's Youth Gateway model has supported over 12,000 young people. By helping them to access the right support earlier, it has prevented and reduced homelessness. Most of these young people were not referred by Local Authority statutory homelessness teams, highlighting that the model can reach those who may otherwise fall through the gaps.

Activity: Building on this model, Homewards BCP will develop and pilot a digital platform that allows young people to seek support. They will be matched with (and supported to engage with) appropriate organisations. This platform will be codesigned with young people, to ensure that it delivers information accessibly – and that it supports them both digitally and in person. As part of this work, we'll also plan the rollout of the platform together, to make sure young people across BCP know it's available and how to access it.

The lead organisation will coordinate a network of organisations that can provide multi-agency support in BCP. They will holistically meet need earlier and prevent homelessness.

Measure: Once the gateway is established, Homewards BCP will evaluate how effective it is in preventing youth homelessness.

Who is leading this work? Youth Homelessness Board, supported by The Royal Foundation

1.2 Upskill trusted adults on homeless prevention

Rationale: There is strong evidence that trusted adults play a crucial protective role in supporting young people's wellbeing and resilience, particularly when they already have established relationships. These relationships are especially important in preventing homelessness, offering early intervention and consistent support when it's needed most.

Activity: As part of the development of the BCP Youth Gateway, we will identify and train trusted adults in local communities. They will then be able to identify the risk indicators of homelessness and will know how to use the Youth Gateway to access support. These trusted adults will then be part of the network of local organisations that offer support to young people.

Measure: Homewards BCP will track whether this training enables young people to access support earlier (with the aim of reducing risk factors, and of reducing homelessness).

Who is leading this work? Youth Homelessness Board, supported by The Royal Foundation

1.3 Embed early prevention to support housing stability

Rationale: Schools are often a key point of contact for families when they are experiencing the challenges that can lead to housing instability. School staff are well placed to notice early warning signs, such as changes in behaviour, attendance or wellbeing. But they may not have the specialist knowledge – or the confidence – to address emerging housing concerns effectively.

Activity: We have embedded a Housing Rights Worker at The Bourne Academy. They are working alongside the school's pastoral team, enhancing the staff's ability to identify young people and families who are at risk of housing instability. They focus on equipping staff to address low-level housing issues and to connect families to the right support at the right time. To foster a more joined-up approach, they are also connecting the school more effectively with BCP Council and the wider voluntary and community sector. Through this work, the Housing Rights Worker will ultimately support up to 90 families (identified through the school) to address housing issues and to prevent homelessness.

Measure: Bournemouth University will evaluate the impact of the interventions on the families involved and report on recommendations for maximising ongoing development and impact.

Who is leading this work? Shelter, in partnership with The Bourne Academy and Bournemouth University.

1.4 Deliver a post-14 alternative curriculum pathway

Rationale: Young people who are currently disengaged from mainstream education are more likely to leave education earlier. They are then at greater risk of becoming homeless in the future – about 60% of young people who present as homeless in BCP are NEET.

Activity: Homewards BCP has identified the need for a vocational alternative to the mainstream school curriculum. This pathway will be delivered through Bournemouth and Poole College and will be targeted at students aged 14+ who are at risk of disengaging from mainstream education because a more direct vocational route is not available in their school. Learners will come out from their school for certain days of the week and study in the vocationally-rich college environment. Its aim is to reduce the number of young people who go on to become NEET.

Measure: Homewards BCP will track:

- How many learners stay engaged in education
- How many progress into further learning, training and/or employment
- The housing situation of the young people who take the alternative curriculum.

Who is leading this work? BCP Council and Bournemouth & Poole College

1.5 New resources for schools and other youth settings

Rationale: Building resilience in young people helps to protect them from homelessness. It strengthens their ability to cope with challenges, maintain relationships and navigate setbacks – all without losing housing stability or support networks.

Activity: With the support of Twinkl, and of The Royal Foundation as part of the Homewards programme, the High Performance Foundation will launch Secure Futures. It is a targeted initiative which provides free, transformative resources for young people at risk of homelessness. Secure Futures combines inspiring video content and interactive activities to build resilience, confidence and life skills. It ensures that vulnerable young people are supported around three core themes:

- Harmful coping mechanisms
- Unemployment
- Long-term cycles of hardship

Measure: The content will be developed in collaboration with Homewards BCP Coalition and piloted in the location.

Who is leading this work? High Performance Foundation

1.6 Deliver data insights to identify homelessness risk patterns for young families (under 30)

Rationale: Evidence shows that many people at risk of homelessness have prior contact with public services before they reach crisis point. By analysing existing data across council services, we can identify the patterns and risk factors that often precede homelessness.

This insight allows for earlier, more targeted interventions to help prevent homelessness.

Activity: Homewards BCP is analysing a range of existing public data to identify people at risk of homelessness. A dedicated Early Intervention Navigator will then proactively reach out to these people, providing targeted support at the earliest possible stage. We are starting by focusing on young families (under 30), including pregnant women.

Measure: Insights from the data analysis project are due early in 2026. We will track both quantitative and qualitative outcomes from the early interventions that follow.

Who is leading this work? BCP Council, The Royal Foundation, Bloomberg Associates, Social Data Analytics

1.7 Improve data collection from young people to understand their specific needs

Rationale: For support services to be effective, they must understand the specific needs of the people they are trying to help – especially if these needs are linked to protected characteristics.

Activity: Homewards BCP needs to better understand the diversity of young people who are at risk of, or experiencing, homelessness. We will strengthen how we collect personal information, particularly data about protected characteristics. This will give us valuable insights into the specific barriers and risks faced by different groups. We will then be able to design and deliver more targeted, inclusive interventions.

Measure: We will track the increase in diversity data that we collect.

Who is leading this work? Youth Homelessness Board

1.8 Create a virtual hub to support frontline workers

Rationale: Frontline workers are often the first point of contact for people in need, yet they frequently face challenges in navigating complex local services. Without quick and easy access to accurate information, opportunities to provide timely and effective support can be missed.

Activity: Homewards BCP will explore digital solutions to help frontline workers quickly identify and access the right local services for individuals. This will enable faster, more effective signposting.

Measure: We will track whether frontline workers feel (1) better connected to partner organisations across BCP and (2) more confident in accessing the information they need.

Who is leading this work? Community Action Network, The Royal Foundation

1.9 Upstream early intervention pilot in schools

Rationale: Upstream is modelled on the Australian Geelong Project, which saw a 40% reduction in youth homelessness and a 20% reduction in the number of young people leaving school early.

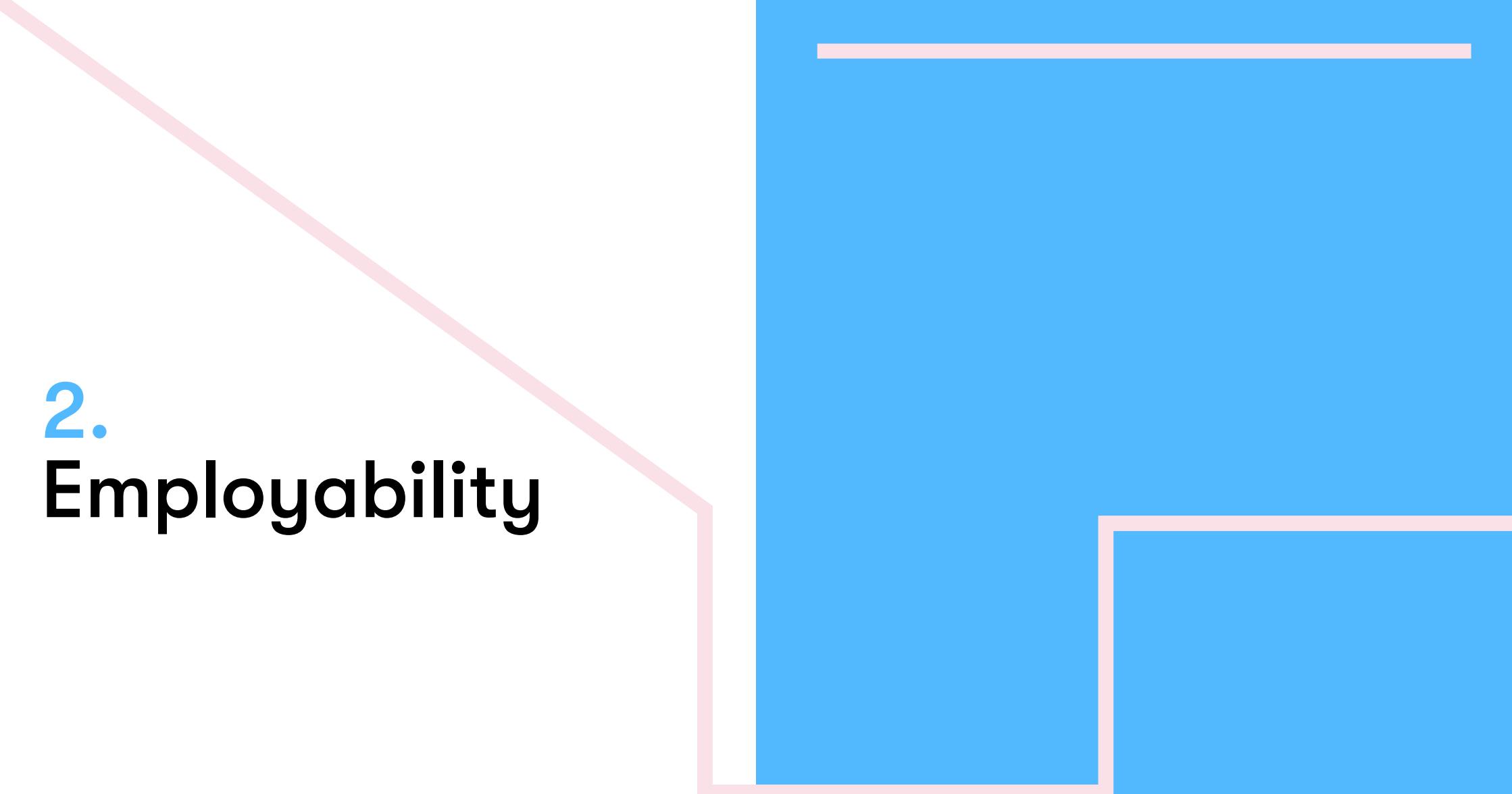
Activity: Homewards BCP will support the rollout of Upstream. After a simple survey to identify pupils at risk, the schools work with local partners to ensure that targeted support is provided before crisis hits.

The Royal Foundation is working

closely with the UK Governance Group for Upstream to explore how it might be embedded and scaled across BCP and beyond.

Measure: Homewards BCP will work with Centrepoint to deliver Upstream, beginning in one school aiming for a Spring start.

Who is leading this work? Centrepoint



2. Employability

What are we going to do over the next 12 months?

2.1 Increased sustainable job opportunities

Rationale: Keeping a home and having a job are inextricably linked.

Activity: Homewards BCP will work with partners to create inclusive, sustainable jobs for young people who are at risk of, or experiencing, homelessness. Target sectors will be guided by local labour market analysis, including insights from Hays. We will support at least four BCP-based employers to begin hiring 18- to 24-year-olds who are at risk of, or experiencing, homelessness.

Measure: Our targets are:

- At least four new employers to ring fence roles for, and hire from, this group
- A minimum of four new starters in total
- 60% of these new starters to sustain employment for at least 12 months

These targets will be measurable in 2026/27.

Who is leading this work?

[The Royal Foundation](#)

2.2 Strengthen local employability pathways

Rationale: Young people at risk of homelessness can need extra support to get, and to keep, a job. Employers often don't know where to turn for well-supported candidates, or for support in inclusive

hiring – even though there are various employability charities and public sector agencies.

Activity: We will bring together local employability providers, so that Homewards BCP can identify – and build on – the most effective routes into sustained work. Working with a range of Coalition partners, we will build strong collaborations, create effective communication and share best practices. This work will include support for individuals and employers, both pre-employment and post-employment. Pathways for young people may include work experience, volunteering and work-readiness programmes. They may also receive help with job applications and interview preparation, as well as ongoing mentoring to help them succeed and thrive.

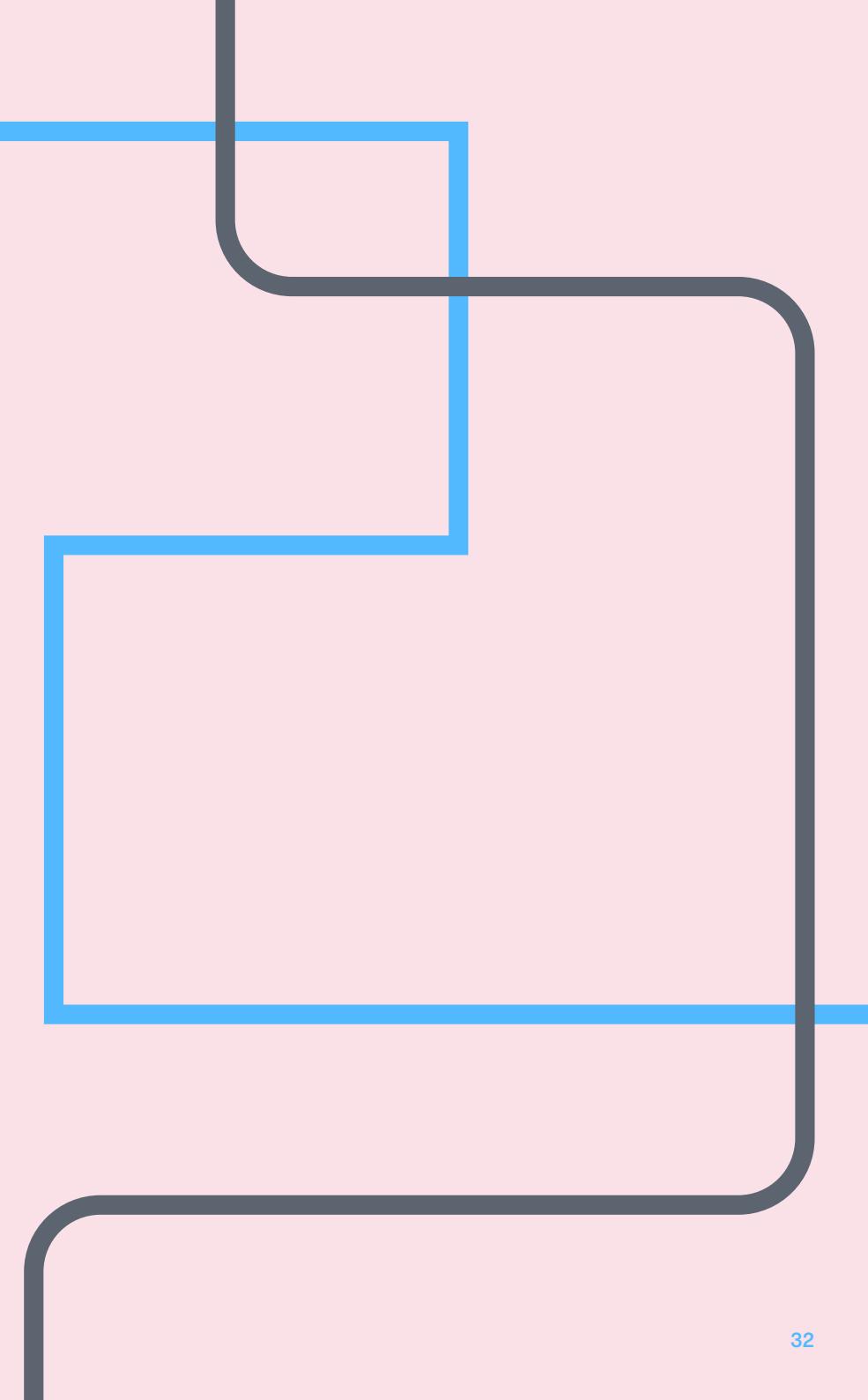
Measure: Local employers are equipped to hire young people at risk of homelessness, and to support them in these new jobs. The hiring is underway. The employers are connected to the local support that's required to sustain the jobs – including support for themselves and for the young people they hire.

Who is leading this work?

[The Royal Foundation](#)



3. **Homes**



What are we doing over the next 12 months?

3.1 Deliver an Innovative Housing Project (IHP)

Rationale: Homewards has committed to delivering an Innovative Housing Project [IHP] in each location. They are all designed to test new ways of making more homes available, at scale, for those at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

Activity: Homewards BCP will work in partnership with BCP Council and local housing providers, to develop an IHP. It is designed to prevent youth homelessness and will include models such as Housing First for Youth. This will be an integrated approach, linking housing allocation with employment, education, and training opportunities to create sustainable pathways for young people. We will partner with The Multibank and major retailers to provide essential furniture and household items, so that the young people we support can successfully settle and thrive.

Measure: We will track how many young people are supported into secure and stable housing, provided with essential items and supported to build successful lives.

Who is leading this work? BCP Council, Sovereign Network Group, The Royal Foundation

3.2 Improve access to funding

Rationale: There is a shortage of affordable housing. We need to consider options for accessible funding to deliver impactful housing initiatives.

Activity: We will launch a Connecting Capital with Community workstream, which seeks to connect strategic housing projects that work to end homelessness with relevant investors and funding opportunities. Alongside this we will support the deployment of £50 million of new lending to help small and medium-sized housing providers and charities. These funds are being committed by Lloyds Banking Group, helping to increase local funding streams in BCP and the other Homewards locations.

Measure: New sources of funding deployed in BCP and housing providers connected to new funding options

Who is leading this work? The Royal Foundation, Lloyds Banking Group, Good Economy

3.3 Increase access to the private rented sector

Rationale: The private rented sector presents particular challenges to young people who are at risk of homelessness.

Activity: Homewards BCP recognises the need to improve pathways into private rented housing, as a sustainable solution for young people. We are exploring and developing opportunities for access, particularly into shared accommodation and single units. This will allow us to expand the range of affordable, sustainable housing options that are available.

We can also support smoother transitions

We can also support smoother transitions to independence and reduce reliance on crisis interventions.

Measure: An additional 15 young people accommodated by the private rented sector

Who is leading this work? DWP Housing, The Royal Foundation

3.4 Increase Nightstop provision and improve transitions into longer-term accommodation

Rationale: There are often limited options for safe, emergency accommodation for young people who are experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness. This increases their vulnerability and makes it harder to access longer-term support.

Activity: Dorset Nightstop provides safe, secure emergency accommodation for young people aged 18-25 in Bournemouth, Poole, and Christchurch. The service offers short-term relief by placing young people in safe and welcoming host homes, while partner agencies work on identifying longer-term housing solutions.

Currently, there are a low number of hosts in BCP. We will develop a communications campaign to support the recruitment of volunteer hosts in the local area. This will increase the capacity to support young people in crisis.

Additionally, a dedicated youth practitioner will be recruited. They will provide holistic, person-centered support to young people and coordinate with partner agencies. They will also be co-located with BCP Council, to help ensure there is a rapid and effective transition into longer-term accommodation.

Measure: We will measure:

- The increase in the number of active Nightstop hosts
- The increase in the number of young people hosted by Nightstop
- The improvements in the pace of transition to longer-term accommodation

Who is leading this work? Action for Children, BCP Council and The Royal Foundation

4. Reframing the Narrative. Shift perceptions around why people experience homelessness



What are we doing over the next 12 months?

4.1 Create and distribute proactive communication tools

Rationale: Public perceptions of homelessness are often shaped by limited or stereotypical narratives. These can reinforce stigma, reduce empathy, and undermine efforts to create lasting change. To effectively engage communities, and to build support for prevention-focused approaches, it is vital to shift how homelessness is spoken about and represented.

Activity: In partnership with CHI, The Royal Foundation is creating bespoke language guides and image banks for each location, expanding CHI's existing assets. The intention is to broaden understanding of homelessness, to encourage empathy and to inspire optimism that homelessness can be ended.

The Royal Foundation is also building relationships with local media partners in each flagship location, to showcase the progress and impact of that location's work.

Measure: We will track:

- The increase in use of language guides and image banks
- Positive changes in language and imagery
- Stronger media engagement

Who is leading this work?

The Royal Foundation

4.2 Develop a new shared communications briefing

Rationale: Strong and consistent communications across the sector can tackle misinformation, stigma and harmful perceptions.

Activity: The Reframing the Narrative Comms group will develop a shared communications briefing for all local partners, which will enable all organisations to deliver consistent, factual and positive communications. This work will be informed by best practices in the sector, including work led by Frameworks.

Measure: Homewards BCP will list the organisations that have received the briefing and ask them for feedback on using it.

Who is leading this work? Reframing the Narrative Comms group

4.3 Create a shared communications grid

Rationale: When organisations coordinate their content and campaigns, it ensures a consistent and coherent narrative across sectors – which strengthens public understanding and trust. A shared communications grid enables partners to align messaging, avoid duplication and collectively amplify the impact of their stories.

Activity: The Reframing the Narrative Comms group will develop a shared annual communications grid. It will set out a schedule of good news content, positive stories and success cases, which can be shared through collective channels. This will include how organisations can coordinate messaging, content and campaigns by using a shared calendar.

Measure: Shared communications grid developed, agreed upon, and actively being used by partners across the Reframing the Narrative Comms Group.

Who is leading this work? Reframing the Narrative Comms group

Get in touch

If you are a business or organisation that wants to find out more about working with Homewards, please contact homewards@royalfoundation.com and one of the team will be in touch.

If you are worried about someone experiencing or at risk of homelessness, you can support them by:

- Connecting them with local support services
- Donating food, clothing, and other supplies
- Giving your time volunteering in your local community

For more information on homelessness across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, please visit the following link: <https://homewards.org.uk/help-resources/>

If you would like to donate, please consider supporting one of the Homewards Sector Partners, who can be found listed here: <https://homewards.org.uk/partners/>

Source list

Information in this Action Plan is based on data collected by Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council about people who are experiencing or on the brink of homelessness, as well as the following sources:

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<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/d/guest/iceni-projects-ltd-on-behalf-of-bcp-and-dorset-council-local-housing-needs-assessment-redacted>

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<https://centrepoint.org.uk/sites/default/files/2023-06/more-than-a-number-the-scale-of-youth-homelessness.pdf>

Action for Children, 'What are the effects of youth homelessness?' Feb 2023
<https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/blog/what-are-the-effects-of-youth-homelessness/#:text=Mental%20and%20physical%20wellbeing,a%20young%20person's%20mental%20wellbeing>

Shelter, 'Factsheet Young people and homelessness,' (2005)
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[Housing prices in Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk)

BCP Council, Dorset Council, 'Draft BCP Local Plan,' (March 2024)
<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/35024/282495/Statement+of+Common+Ground+-+BCP+and+Dorset+Council+March+2024.pdf>

Latest official statistics about homelessness in England are available here:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statutory-homelessness-in-england-financial-year-2023-24>

homewards

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christchurch and poole

