

**“It's gave me stability, security, it's gave me a bit of self-growth.”**

**HOUSE  
Insight Briefing**

Sarah Henderson & Georgia Davenport  
People's Voice Media  
November 2025

## Contents

Executive Summary .....	2
Introduction .....	4
About People's Voice Media.....	4
Methodology.....	6
Challenges.....	7
1. NACRO, London .....	8
"Since moving into the accommodation I've been able to handle my life, I've become more independent." – Increased independence and stability .....	9
"I'd like to study and go to college" – Access to education, training and employment .....	10
"I've tried to kill myself before but now I don't think like this because I'm very happy" – Improved mental health and wellbeing .....	10
"I need people in my life and it's a massive, massive thing for me." – Inclusion in community and support .....	11
Conclusion .....	13
2. Thrive (Target), Sheffield .....	15
"I know that I can settle down now and move on and get my life back" – Security & Stability .....	15
"My key worker, I wouldn't change in a month of Sundays" – Wrap Around Support.....	16
Conclusion .....	17
3. P3, Wolverhampton.....	19
"When you've got somewhere to come, to call home, which they've provided, you've got a base" – Security and Stability .....	20
"It's just home and it's, you know, you feel relaxed, ... which that's brilliant" – Improving Mental Health and Wellbeing.....	20
"I manage my bills, tenancy, shopping and all that. I can do all that" – Increased Independence and Responsibility .....	21
Conclusion .....	22
Most Significant Change and Next Steps.....	24
References .....	25
Appendix: Practice recommendations.....	26



**Head Office:** The Fort Offices, Artillery Business Park, Park Hall, Oswestry, Shropshire, SY11 4AD.

**Email:** [enquiries@peoplesvoicemedia.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@peoplesvoicemedia.co.uk)

**Website:** <https://peoplesvoicemedia.co.uk>

**Company No:** 3083575

**Charity No:** 1059681

## Executive Summary

The Everyone In Social Investment Pilot represents an innovative approach to tackling homelessness in England, building on the original Everyone In initiative. The Pilot is a collaborative effort, bringing together Big Society Capital, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (now Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government), Bridges Fund Management, Resonance, Social and Sustainable Capital (SASC), and a network of local not-for-profit providers. Its core aim is to make affordable, stable housing available to people experiencing or at risk of homelessness by enabling not-for-profit providers to purchase properties from the commercial market and let them at Local Housing Allowance rates.

Manchester Metropolitan University's Policy Evaluation and Research Unit (PERU) was commissioned to evaluate the Pilot, with People's Voice Media enlisted to collect lived experience stories from residents. These stories, gathered using the Community Reporting methodology—a participatory digital storytelling approach—form the foundation of this report. The evaluation focused on three key providers: NACRO (London), Target Housing (Sheffield, as 'Thrive'), and P3 (Wolverhampton). Despite some challenges in provider and resident engagement, rich qualitative data was collected, yielding valuable insights into the impact of secure housing and support on people's lives.

## Key Findings

Across all three providers, the Most Significant Change resulting from the provision of stable housing was the emergence of security and stability in residents' lives. This fundamental shift underpinned a range of other positive outcomes, including improved mental health and wellbeing, increased independence and responsibility, enhanced access to education and employment, and stronger community connections.

- **Stability and Security:** Residents consistently described the transformative effect of having a "base" or a permanent home, which provided respite from the chaos and uncertainty of homelessness. This stability was vital in enabling other aspects of recovery and growth.
- **Mental Health and Wellbeing:** Secure accommodation was linked to notable improvements in mental health. Residents reported feeling more relaxed, happier, and more able to seek help or engage in activities that supported their wellbeing.
- **Independence and Responsibility:** The move to self-contained housing fostered greater independence. Residents gained life skills such as managing bills, maintaining tenancies, and making decisions about their future, often for the first time.
- **Education, Training and Employment:** Stable housing was a catalyst for engaging in education, training, and employment. Several residents began or resumed studies, obtained qualifications, or sought jobs, with provider support playing a key role.
- **Community and Support Networks:** Being part of a community, building relationships with neighbours, and having ongoing support from key workers or support staff were

pivotal in sustaining positive changes. These relationships helped reduce isolation and facilitated reintegration.

### Provider Highlights

- NACRO (London): Residents experienced increased independence, access to education and work, improved mental health, and a renewed sense of community. NACRO's approach combined housing provision with tailored support, enabling residents to move towards long-term stability and self-sufficiency.
- Target Housing/Thrive (Sheffield): The permanence of housing and lifelong wrap-around support distinguished the Thrive project. Residents cited deep increases in confidence, wellbeing, and personal relationships, crediting the consistent presence and engagement of key workers.
- P3 (Wolverhampton): The phased support model enabled residents to progress from supported tenancies to independent living. Security, improved mental health, and the development of practical life skills were recurring themes, as was the importance of accessible, non-judgemental support.

### Challenges and Methodological Notes

The evaluation encountered challenges in engaging some providers and residents, partly due to the complex needs of individuals and the stigma attached to homelessness. Adaptations such as flexible story-gathering methods (workshops, in-home interviews) were introduced to maximise participation. Despite these hurdles, the stories collected provide deep insights into the lived experience of housing insecurity and recovery.

### Conclusions and Recommendations

The Pilot has demonstrated that providing safe, affordable, and stable housing, combined with ongoing, person-centred support, creates the conditions necessary for individuals to rebuild their lives. Stability serves as the foundation for all other positive changes, whether in health, employment, relationships, or community involvement.

The evaluation points to the need for future policy and practice to prioritise long-term, secure housing solutions and to recognise the value of integrated, wrap-around support tailored to individual needs. Practice recommendations for providers, detailed in the full report appendix, include fostering supportive communities, prioritising trauma-informed approaches, and maintaining flexibility in service delivery to accommodate diverse needs. Overall, the Everyone In Social Investment Pilot offers compelling evidence that social investment models, when partnered with not-for-profit providers and lived experience-driven evaluation, can deliver lasting, positive change for people experiencing homelessness.



**Head Office:** The Fort Offices, Artillery Business Park, Park Hall, Oswestry, Shropshire, SY11 4AD.

**Email:** [enquiries@peoplesvoicemedia.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@peoplesvoicemedia.co.uk)

**Website:** <https://peoplesvoicemedia.co.uk>

**Company No:** 3083575

**Charity No:** 1059681

## Introduction

The Everyone In Social Investment Pilot was launched as a follow-on to the Everyone In initiative. It is piloting a social investment approach to homelessness and is a partnership between Big Society Capital (BSC), the Department for Levelling Up, Housing, Communities (DLUHC), Bridges Fund Management, Resonance and Social and Sustainable Capital (SASC). The Pilot contributes to five social investment funds run by three Fund Managers, all of which work with local not-for-profit providers of accommodation and services for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The funds help these Providers with the purchase of existing housing from the commercial property market in partnership with local not-for-profit organisations and making them available at Local Housing Allowance rent levels to ensure they remain affordable.

Manchester Metropolitan University's (MMU) Policy Evaluation and Research Unit (PERU) has been contracted to evaluate the programme. As part of this evaluation, People's Voice Media have been commissioned to gather lived experience stories of people who have been housed through the Pilot and use these stories to assess the Most Significant Change, based on the Theory of Change for each provider. We have used the Community Reporting methodology to allow people to share their experiences. These stories provide insights into the lives of current residents and the changes having access to accommodation has made to them. The findings from the stories are presented here in this analysis. Where relevant, the insights have been mapped to outcomes in a Theory of Change produced by PERU for each provider.

## About People's Voice Media

People's Voice Media is a civil society organisation established in 1995, that uses storytelling as a tool for social change in the UK and across Europe. As a team we:

- Learn and adapt
- Work collaboratively and equitably
- Act authentically and with integrity
- Come with optimism and joy

Our Board, team, and network of freelancers are a diverse group of people committed to working in this way to achieve our vision.

In 2007 we launched the Community Reporting methodology and began to build the Community Reporter Network. Community Reporting is a digital storytelling approach that supports people's participation in research, policymaking, service development, and decision-making processes. We know we cannot achieve our ambitions alone. The Community Reporter Network now spans the UK and Europe. It has 50+ active partner organisations from different sectors in the arenas of policy, research and services, and has trained over 2,000 Community Reporters.

The core objectives of our work are to:



**Head Office:** The Fort Offices, Artillery Business Park, Park Hall, Oswestry, Shropshire, SY11 4AD.

**Email:** [enquiries@peoplesvoicemedia.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@peoplesvoicemedia.co.uk)

**Website:** <https://peoplesvoicemedia.co.uk>

**Company No:**3083575

**Charity No:**1059681

1. Enable people's lived experience to be heard, and provide platforms for marginalised voices
2. Support people, communities and organisations to use lived experience to address inequalities and injustices
3. Inform and influence services and policies so that they better meet people's needs and enable people to live well

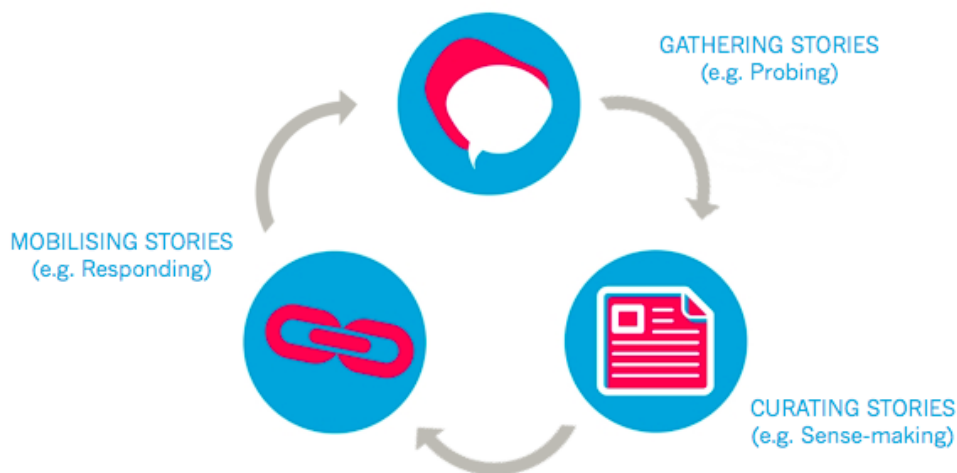
Our work will put lived experience at the heart of service improvement, policy development, and research practices.

## Methodology

Community Reporting is a qualitative research method which uses peer-to-peer approaches to gather, understand, and mobilise stories of lived experience to create change. Originating in 2007, Community Reporting has been developed across Europe as an approach for enhancing citizen participation in community development, research, policymaking, service development, evaluation and decision-making processes (Keresztély and Trowbridge, 2019; Geelhoed et al, 2021; Trowbridge and Willoughby, 2020). In-line with work such as Glasby (2011) and Durose et al (2013), this method emphasises validity of lived experience and knowledge-based practice in these fields. Community Reporting uses digital, portable technologies to support people to tell their own stories, in their own ways via peer-to-peer approaches. It then connects these stories with the people, groups and organisations who are able to use the insights within them to make positive social change. When used like this, storytelling, as Durose et al (2013) argues, allows for the representation of 'different voices and experiences in an accessible way'. Central to Community Reporting is the belief that people telling authentic stories about their own lived experience offers a valuable understanding of their lives.

Community Reporting has three distinct components – story gathering, story curation and story mobilisation – based around the Cynefin decision-making framework for complex environments (Snowden and Boone, 2007), as depicted in Diagram 1.

**Diagram 1: Community Reporting Cycle**



To ensure a degree of consistency within the Community Reporting practice and how it is implemented, Responsible Storytelling is embedded into each Community Reporting activity. Responsible Storytelling accounts for the ethics and values of Community Reporting; ensures appropriate content; ensures the necessary permissions and consent are gained; and puts people's online and offline safety at the heart of the practice.

Story curation involved working with Community Reporters, storytellers and people connected to the storytelling context to review and analyse the stories gathered to produce a set of findings. This participatory process borrows from established qualitative data

analysis practices such as discourse analysis (Brown and Yule, 1983) and grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Tummers and Karsten, 2012) which provide a framework through which hypotheses can emerge from the data rather than being imposed upon it. Furthermore, Pierre Lévy's (1997) concept of 'collective intelligence' underpins the group sense-making aspects of this process; in principle, multiple people's knowledge is a greater than an individual's knowledge. People's Voice Media replicated this process internally to curate any stories not covered in the participatory sessions.

Story Mobilisation processes connect the learning from stories to people, groups, and organisations who are able to use this knowledge to create positive change.

## Challenges

During the recruitment phase for this project, we have faced certain challenges. Some providers have been less able to engage than others, but, even when providers have been actively supportive of the evaluation, we have found that the complex needs of many of the residents – as well as the stigma of being 'labelled' as homeless – have meant we have had to use alternative models of story gathering in order to better support people to share their lived experience. Methods used have included:

- Workshops in which residents are trained in peer-to-peer story gathering methods.
- Sessions held at the offices of the providers in which residents attend one-to-one interviews with a Community Reporter from the People's Voice Media team.
- One-to-one interviews held at the residents' accommodation, in which a Community Reporter from the People's Voice Media team visits them to gather their story in their home environment.

We have made these adaptations to ensure people can feel comfortable sharing their story in a way that best suits them, and to allow us to gather as many stories as possible to give the most depth to the evaluation. However, we still faced blockers and challenges in getting providers to engage, despite making significant adaptations to our processes. As a result, we were only able to gather stories from three providers (NACRO, Target, and P3) and only in limited numbers. We were also unable to speak to staff in as much depth as we would like, and, as a result, this report has focused primarily on resident experience and the impact of housing.

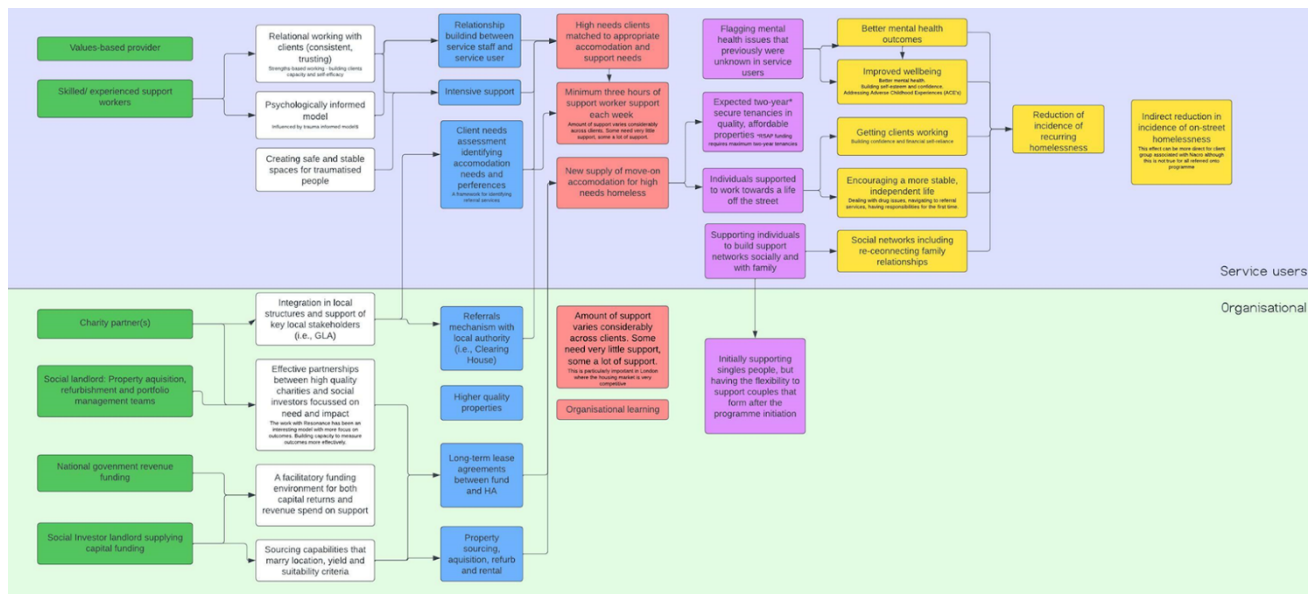
Despite the challenges faced, the insights we have gathered are valuable and give a clear view of the (positive) changes wrought by being housed, including Most Significant Change. These insights have also allowed us to produce practice recommendations for providers (this can be found in the Appendix) around working with people who are homeless/at risk of homelessness in a way that accommodates their complex needs and reduces the chances of reoccurring homelessness.

## 1. NACRO, London

Based in London, NACRO is a charity which provides practical help and personalised support through their education, housing, justice and health and wellbeing services. They work closely with people to help them build independence and to move forward to a better future. NACRO has 56 properties across London through the Pilot, mostly located in small estates and in smaller blocks of flats. Residents are expected to stay in their property for up to two years before moving on to longer term accommodation. During this time they receive support from NACRO in education, training, seeking employment, and other areas.

During our story gathering sessions with NACRO, we spoke to residents – some in one-to-one interviews and others in a workshop setting – followed by a sense-making session in which NACRO staff analysed the stories to identify the changes in the lives of the people they work with and produced Ripple Effect Maps<sup>1</sup>. In this report, we will present these findings and map them to NACRO's Theory of Change (Diagram 2). In the diagram, short-term outcomes are in pink, mid-term outcomes are in purple, and long-term outcomes are in yellow.

**Diagram 2: NACRO Theory of Change**



<sup>1</sup> Ripple Effect Mapping is a technique for impact evaluation, specifically for community-based programmes/projects. It is designed to capture the 'ripples' of impact that are hard to measure by more traditional methods or that don't happen immediately. It involves people who are a part of process/project reflecting upon and visually mapping intended and unintended changes. They then present the findings from their Ripple Effect Map as a recorded presentation.

## **“Since moving into the accommodation I've been able to handle my life, I've become more independent.” – Increased independence and stability**

A running theme through the stories is that of increased independence and stability after moving into the property, something that was also picked up on during Ripple Effect Mapping. This ties in to the long-term Theory of Change outcome, **encouraging a more stable, independent life**. One storyteller told us that:

*Before I was living in the place I'm living now with NACRO, I was living in a shared house for two years and we were always under the eye of support workers - depending on them telling us what to do.*

While he goes on to say he did appreciate the support and that it helped him at the time, he feels that it can't be a long-term solution.

*When you're not independent - you always have to look at other people for others to tell me what to do. I realised they were people who were also helping me, but I didn't want to rely on them for ever. I believe those institutions are there to help you for a while, but you're the one who has to do the job, you can't live like that [with 24/7 support] forever.*

He says that “*Since moving into the accommodation I've been able to handle my life, I've become more independent,*” suggesting that moving away from the full-time support model and into self-contained accommodation has given him control over his life. This also links to the short-term Theory of Change outcome, wherein **high needs clients [are] matched to appropriate accommodation and support needs**. In this case, that comes from a gradual reduction of support as the storyteller becomes more independent. Another storyteller takes this a step further, discussing how the independence granted by living in their own home has extended into financial independence:

*It's gave me stability, security, it's gave me a bit of self-growth as it's shown me that I can actually pay bills on time, I can open up accounts. I was very much a cash in hand person but now I've ventured into the realm of Direct Debits - it's shown me I've got potential to move on and do other things.*

One particular issue caused by homelessness is the cycle of not being able to get a bank account without a fixed address, and not being able to do things such as find employment without a bank account, perpetuating the cycle. This storyteller demonstrates how having a fixed abode allows them to have bank accounts and use Direct Debits which, in turn, helps them be more stable by assisting them with paying bills on time, lifting them out of the chaotic cycle that can come with no bank account and relying on cash, freeing them to work on other aspects of their life. This connects to the mid-term Theory of Change outcome whereby **individuals [are] supported to work towards a life off the street**.

In our Ripple Effect Mapping session, these themes were picked up on, with the NACRO staff discussing how housing “*gives a sense of independence,*” as well as “*continuity,*” “*empowerment,*” and “*stability, safety, and security.*” This concept of accommodation giving

increased independence and stability underpins many of the other outcomes discussed here.

### **“I’d like to study and go to college” – Access to education, training and employment**

Another theme to emerge from the stories is that of housing helping with access to education, training, and employment, which supports NACRO’s Theory of Change long-term outcome of **getting clients working**. One storyteller talks about how NACRO supported him with developing life skills and training to work in hospitality: “*Now I am bidding for permanent accommodation so I can take full-time employment.*” Another storyteller, who is a refugee, talks about how, since moving into his flat he has had support in gaining his driver’s licence, which will help him in his work as a plumber and electrician: “*I’ve started to look for work if I find five-to-six customers, I’ll be busy.*” Another storyteller tells how he wishes to continue his education: “*I had a support worker for another year, I told her I’d like to study and go to college, and she was helping me to apply for the course.*” He tells how he is also writing a book which he hopes to publish this year and is gradually learning how to trade currencies in order to boost his income so that he will not be reliant on benefits. He talks about how he could not have done any of these things while living in hostels as he felt they were an unsafe environment and cites living with people who would steal from him as something preventing him from doing these things. However, in his own home he feels safe and secure enough to work towards these goals. Again, this demonstrates the short-term outcome of **high needs clients [being] matched to appropriate accommodation and support needs**, the mid-term goal of **individuals [being] supported to work towards a life off the street**, and the long-term goal of **encouraging a more stable, independent life**.

The ability to access education, training, and employment stems from having a stable living environment which the accommodation NACRO are providing – along with their wrap-around support – has helped storytellers with.

### **“I’ve tried to kill myself before but now I don’t think like this because I’m very happy” – Improved mental health and wellbeing**

All of the storytellers at NACRO have discussed their mental health and wellbeing, and how accommodation has helped with the various issues they have been living with. This, naturally, ties into the long-term Theory of Change outcome of **better mental health outcomes**. One storyteller has struggled with social anxiety as a result of previously living on the street, in hostels, and in shared accommodation where he encountered people who harmed him.

*I do struggle with social anxiety, I don't really feel comfortable being around people for a long time. I was going to employment academies and that helped me force myself to be somewhere with people for longer and I realised not everyone is as bad as the people I used to meet in the hostels and on the street. I came across really bad people, I was getting beaten up, I was robbed - so over the years I put up those boundaries, I was on my own, I didn't want anyone around and I felt comfortable like*

*that. But you can't live your life that way you need to interact, so I started with that [employment academies] at the House of Barnabas.*

He describes how support from NACRO combined with the independence and security he felt living in his own space encouraged him to take these steps towards trusting people again and de-isolating himself. Another resident talks about his improving mental health struggles which stem from his traumatic experiences being deported from Saudi Arabia to Afghanistan, and his experiences with the Taliban.

*I get lots of help from NACRO. I've tried to kill myself before [shows scars on wrist] but now I don't think like this because I'm very happy in England. I have moving paper, I have driving lessons, I don't think I need much more. Before, I was scared they'd send me to Afghanistan, this is why I started to do drugs and wanted to kill myself - if they'd have sent me to Afghanistan the Taliban would've killed me.*

Being given accommodation is only one part of the recovery journey for someone living with trauma, addiction, and complex mental health issues, however, it's clear that it provides a stable base for the other support provided by NACRO to build upon. Another storyteller confirms this when he talks about the safety and security he has felt since being provided with his home, saying, "I think my mood is... Now I can feel much more better." It is apparent from the stories, though, that it is not simply having a home that leads people towards recovery, it is the other factors that having a stable home brings, one of which is community, a theme this report will now go on to examine.

### **"I need people in my life and it's a massive, massive thing for me." – Inclusion in community and support**

Community and support from other people (including NACRO) comes up in all of the stories gathered so far. This connects to the mid-term Theory of Change outcome of **supporting individuals to build support networks socially and with family**, and the further-reaching long-term outcome of **social networks including reconnecting family relationships**. One storyteller gives an account of how having his home has made him feel part of a community and how that has helped him:

*It's given me a bit of inclusion because where I live personally I'm on a private estate and I actually communicate with my neighbours whereas previously I didn't communicate with anybody. I need people in my life and it's a massive, massive thing for me. Growing up the way I did and living where I did previous to where I am now it's very much 'we' can do things and not 'I' can do things - that's how I try to live my life now, being part of, included in, the community, and not separate from them.*

When asked what has helped him feel as if he's part of the community, he continues:

*My neighbours, for a start. There's a gentleman lives next door to me and he's a lovely, lovely man. I try and emulate that back. I used to tell people that I'm not a people person, that I didn't like people, whereas more, on the other hand, I actually wanted to be around people. But because I was in bad situations and abusing drugs*

*and drink I told people that I didn't like being around people - and I'm the exact opposite. ... Being around people, and trusting people, I've learned a lot about myself.*

This sense of being part of a community and being included in that community is very different to the experience of being homeless where there is a stigma that can make people feel othered by or separate to the people around them. Having a home has helped this storyteller break free from those perceptions and be an active part of their local community which is, in turn, helping their feelings of stability and security. However, it's important to note that this isn't a 'magic wand' and that for other people their experience of homelessness can still make them feel as if they don't fit in. Another storyteller explains:

*Sometimes [I feel lonely] yes because I have no family here. You need somebody who has the same life experience - because I know [my support worker] has the same life experience from working with people on the street but sometimes I do feel lonely because nobody can understand me.*

Despite this, though, he does feel that having someone there for him in the form of his support worker, and living in a home within a 'nice' area has helped him.

*When I have problems I can speak with [my support worker]. After five-to-ten minutes I feel OK because I know there's somebody who's like a friend. Now it's better, it's about security. Now I'm in a nice area with nice neighbours I have no problems.*

Once again, that notion of security goes hand-in-hand with feeling comfortable and happy. Security isn't just having a place to live, but also the area, the neighbours and the support – all of these things come with the home, which suggests having a stable home environment isn't just about bricks and mortar. A member of the NACRO team also points this out in their Ripple Effect Map presentation: *"It [housing] acts as a springboard for a number of things... A smorgasbord of positive outcomes."* After listing all of the outcomes already mentioned in this report they add, *"Without the self-contained flats, none of this can happen."* The storyteller themselves goes on to add to this, that having a home is just the first – albeit very important – step and that community and support are essential alongside it:

*If you want to change your life first you need to try and change yourself. you have to start to cooperate with somebody or an organisation like NACRO. When you're alone you have no help no future and you can go down. First step is [a] good plan and knowledge about your life experience. It's important to feel safety - if you're alone it's not easy.*

Another storyteller confirms this. After telling how drug addiction left them homeless and drove away friends and family, they conclude: *"NACRO changed my life by giving me temporary accommodation. Now I have friends, now my family wants to know me."*

The housing provided by NACRO through Everyone In is vital, then, but it is a foundation on which everything else is built, a stepping stone to a variety of changes in people's lives through independence, stability, and community.

## Conclusion

The Most Significant Change for NACRO's residents, based on the lived experience stories of residents, is the **increased independence and stability** that their home and the accompanying support gives them.

Other notable changes include:

- Access to education, training and employment
- Improved mental health and wellbeing
- Inclusion in community and support

We have mapped these changes to NACRO's Theory of Change outcomes where relevant and have attached these to evidence from the stories gathered so far in Table 1.

**Table 1: NACRO Theory of Change outcomes mapped to evidence from gathered stories**

<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Direct quotes from stories</b>
<b>Short-Term</b>	
High needs clients matched to appropriate accommodation and support needs	Before I was living in the place I'm living now with NACRO, I was living in a shared house for two years and we were always under the eye of support workers - depending on them telling us what to do. ... I realised they were people who were also helping me, but I didn't want to rely on them for ever.
<b>Mid-Term</b>	
Individuals supported to work towards a life off the street	I can open up accounts. I was very much a cash in hand person but now I've ventured into the realm of Direct Debits - it's shown me I've got potential to move on and do other things.
Supporting individuals to build support networks socially and with family	First step is [a] good plan and knowledge about your life experience. It's important to feel safety - if you're alone it's not easy.  NACRO changed my life by giving me temporary accommodation. Now I have friends, now my family wants to know me
<b>Long-Term</b>	
Encouraging a more stable, independent life	Since moving into the accommodation, I've been able to handle my life, I've become more independent.  Now I am bidding for permanent accommodation so I can take full-time employment



**Head Office:** The Fort Offices, Artillery Business Park, Park Hall, Oswestry, Shropshire, SY11 4AD.

**Email:** [enquiries@peoplesvoicemedia.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@peoplesvoicemedia.co.uk)

**Website:** <https://peoplesvoicemedia.co.uk>

**Company No:**3083575

**Charity No:**1059681

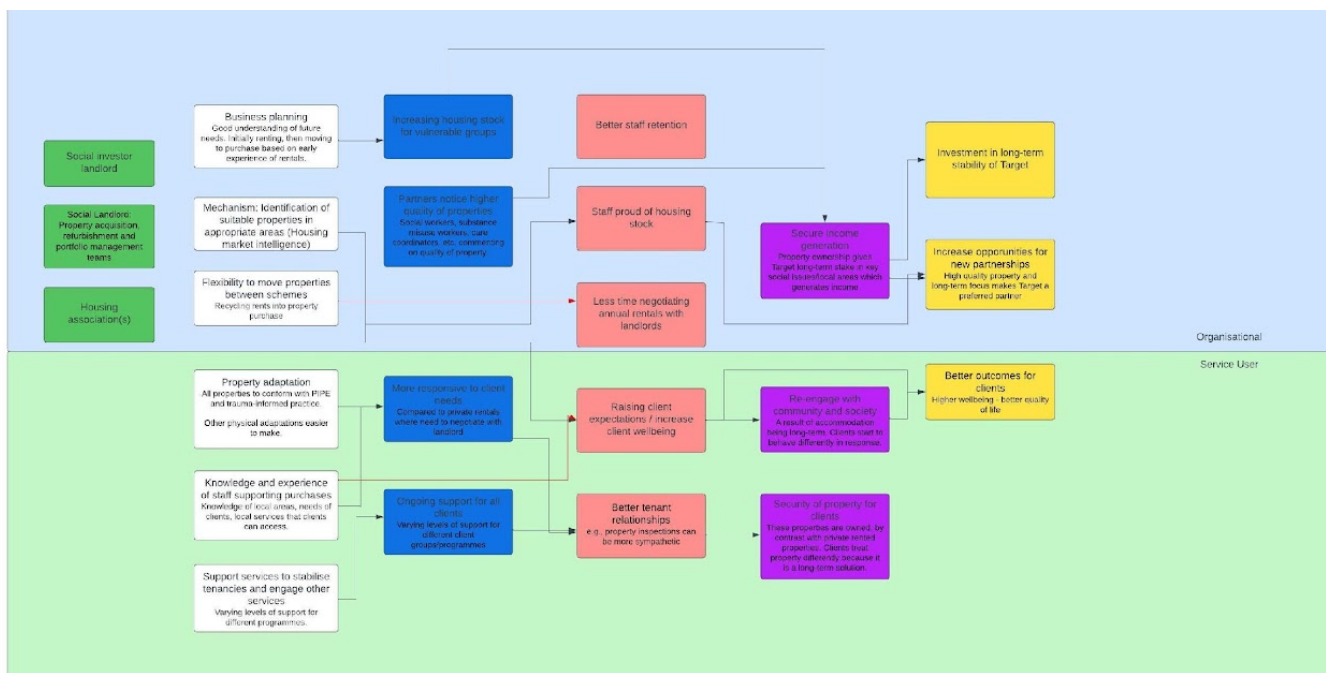
Getting clients working	I've started to look for work if I find five-to-six customers, I'll be busy.
Better mental health outcomes	I think my mood is... Now I can feel much more better.
Social networks including reconnecting family	Growing up the way I did and living where I did previous to where I am now it's very much 'we' can do things and not 'I' can do things - that's how I try to live my life now, being part of, included in, the community, and not separate from them.

## 2. Thrive (Target), Sheffield

Target Housing is a social landlord providing accommodation and support to the most vulnerable people in society including homeless people, asylum seekers and refugees, people with multiple and complex needs, survivors of domestic violence, people with learning disabilities and physical disabilities. Target's Thrive project is based in Sheffield and provides a package of permanent accommodation and life-long support for vulnerable people, who have experienced lives characterised by adverse experiences, trauma, and chaos.

During our story gathering sessions with Thrive, we spoke to residents in one-to-one interviews in their homes, followed by a sense-making session in which Thrive staff analysed the stories to identify the changes in the lives of the people they work with, and produced Ripple Effect Maps. In this report, we will present these findings and map them to Target's Theory of Change (Diagram 3). In the diagram, short-term outcomes are in pink, mid-term outcomes are in purple, and long-term outcomes are in yellow.

**Diagram 3: Target Theory of Change**



### “I know that I can settle down now and move on and get my life back” – Security & Stability

One of the two main themes to emerge from residents housed under Target's Thrive project is that of security and stability. Unlike many other providers who offer housing and support on a more temporary basis, Target's Thrive project offers permanent housing and lifelong support for residents. This sense of stability makes a big difference to residents. One lady

spoke about how her previous experiences of housing have been unsettled. In one place she slept under asbestos and now has health complications due to falling dust. She talks about how she would always worry about when she would next be moved on, and where that would be to. However, with this house, she feels stable and settled: “*I know that I can settle down now and move on and get my life back.*” She also says:

*I've gained confidence. I've still got a lot of problems but I'm getting round it. ... This place has been brilliant. Coming from nothing, like a tramp, and now I'm starting to get confidence. ... If it weren't for this place, I don't know where I'd be. Probably in the ground.*

This all ties to the long-term Theory of Change outcome of **better outcomes for clients**.

The properties themselves are secure and in areas that are considered safe. This makes a big difference to residents who, in previous accommodation had been the victims of crime within those spaces. One resident talks about how in a previous home, he “*had fifteen-year-olds kicking my door in,*” but he says how he does not have that fear since he found a home through Thrive. Another resident speaks warmly about the feeling of security he has in his home now: “*Locked in my own property and knowing no bastard's going to get in here. ... That's a nice position to be in.*” These naturally link to the mid-term Theory of Change outcome of **security of property for clients** but in turn connects to the short-term outcome of **raising client expectations/increased client wellbeing**, and the long-term outcome of **better outcomes for clients**.

This sense of stability and security forms a bedrock for other outcomes, for clients, but it is the level of support from Thrive that has also made a big difference to residents, which we will now examine.

### **“My key worker, I wouldn't change in a month of Sundays” – Wrap Around Support**

The wrap around support offered by Thrive is lifelong, so residents can access it alongside the permanent accommodation. Residents were keen to speak about the difference it makes to their lives, with one saying, “*Before I was treated as though I'm an offender, when I'm not. ... Now I'm in here, it seems like I'm getting listened to,*” while another says, “*It makes me content and happy ... Target and Thrive ... have done so much for me. All good.*”

The role of the key worker is explicitly mentioned by several residents, and it is clear that there are strong relationships between residents and those who support them. One resident says, “*My key worker, I wouldn't change in a month of Sundays. Best thing since sliced bread,*” and this sense of satisfaction comes through in all the stories. One talks about how her key worker's support has helped her get off drugs completely, and now she's reducing the alcohol she consumes: “*They're getting me into detox as well. ... I'm better, I'm happier.*” Almost all the residents we spoke to talked about how the key workers help them with shopping, or with social outings such as going to the cinema, all things they wouldn't feel able to do alone due to physical or emotional issues. Key workers also help keep track of appointments, which has helped ensure recovery from health complaints, and has also helped with rehabilitation programmes.

This sort of support also has benefits for the people in the residents' lives. One in particular talks about the support the key worker has given them has improved their relationship with their mum, and allowed them to see their daughter again: *"My daughter's happier ... If she's happy, everyone's happy."*

The discussion of the importance of wrap around support links to several Theory of Change outcomes, notably the short-term outcomes of **raising client expectations/increasing client wellbeing**, and **better tenant relationships**, and the mid-term outcome of **re-engaging with community and society**.

## Conclusion

The Most Significant Change for Target's residents, based on the lived experience stories of residents, is the **security and stability** that their home and the accompanying support gives them.

Other notable changes include:

- Improved physical and mental wellbeing
- New and rebuilt support networks
- Being active in the community

We have mapped these changes to Target's Theory of Change outcomes where relevant and have attached these to evidence from the stories gathered so far in Table 2.

**Table 2: Target Theory of Change outcomes mapped to evidence from gathered stories**

Outcomes	Direct quotes from stories
<b>Short-Term</b>	
Raising client expectations/increasing client wellbeing	<p>Before I was treated as though I'm an offender, when I'm not. ... Now I'm in here, it seems like I'm getting listened to.</p> <p>It makes me content and happy ... Target and Thrive ... have done so much for me. All good.</p> <p>They're getting me into detox as well. ... I'm better, I'm happier.</p>
Better tenant relationships	My key worker, I wouldn't change in a month of Sundays. Best thing since sliced bread.
<b>Mid-Term</b>	
Re-engage with community and society	<p>Jack [key worker] goes shopping, goes the cinema.</p> <p>My daughter's happier ... If she's happy, everyone's happy.</p>



**Head Office:** The Fort Offices, Artillery Business Park, Park Hall, Oswestry, Shropshire, SY11 4AD.

**Email:** [enquiries@peoplesvoicemedia.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@peoplesvoicemedia.co.uk)

**Website:** <https://peoplesvoicemedia.co.uk>

**Company No:**3083575

**Charity No:**1059681

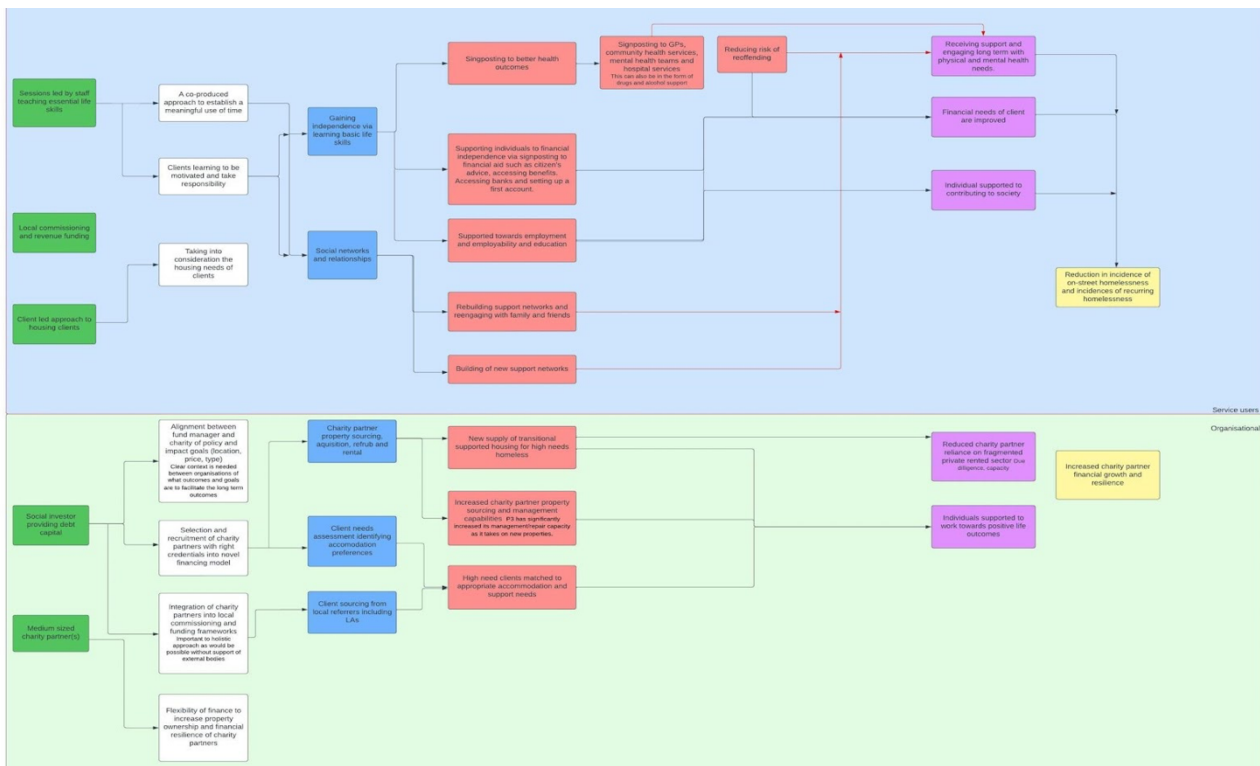
<p>Security of property for clients</p>	<p>Locked in my own property and knowing no bastard's going to get in here. ... That's a nice position to be in.</p> <p>I had fifteen-year-olds kicking my door in [in previous accommodation]</p>
<p><b>Long-Term</b></p>	
<p>Better outcomes for clients</p>	<p>I've gained confidence. I've still got a lot of problems but I'm getting round it. ... This place has been brilliant. Coming from nothing, like a tramp, and now I'm starting to get confidence. ... If it weren't for this place, I don't know where I'd be. Probably in the ground.</p> <p>I know that I can settle down now and move on and get my life back.</p>

### 3. P3, Wolverhampton

P3 operates in Wolverhampton, Gloucestershire, and Lincolnshire. They used the fund to purchase a mix of one- and two-bedroom properties with different tenancy options available. In Wolverhampton, tenants tend to stay in a property for around two years, while making their way through a phased support programme that guides them towards independence. P3 also offers advice and support to tenants, including signposting, benefits advice, housing advice, mental health support, and substance misuse support.

Initially, we hoped to speak to residents in all of the areas in which P3 operate. Ultimately, we were only able to engage P3 Wolverhampton, and then only for the story gathering part of the process, where we gathered five stories in early 2024. As we were unable to conduct Ripple Effect Mapping or sense making with P3, the People's Voice team has analysed the stories using the same methodology we would apply in a sense making workshop, to derive insights from the shared lived experiences. In this report, we will present these findings and map them to P3's Theory of Change (Diagram 4). In the diagram, short-term outcomes are in pink, mid-term outcomes are in purple, and long-term outcomes are in yellow.

**Diagram 4: P3 Theory of Change**



## “When you’ve got somewhere to come, to call home, which they’ve provided, you’ve got a base” – Security and Stability

As in Sheffield, one of the primary themes to emerge here was that of security and stability. As one Wolverhampton resident puts it, “*When you’ve got somewhere to come, to call home, which they’ve [P3] provided, you’ve got a base,*” while another points out that when you have a home, “*you know what you’re doing,*” – referring to the stability and order that being housed can offer. These stories link closely with the short-term Theory of Change outcome of **high need clients matched to appropriate accommodation and support needs**, and the long-term outcome of **reduction in incidence of on-street homelessness and instances of recurring homelessness**. It’s this stability that underpins many other outcomes, such as employability, financial stability, and wellbeing by helping people out of crisis and homelessness, giving them a home, and signposting them to support.

This also connects to the security of the tenure, which is a big factor for the residents who shared their stories. One resident points out: “*I know it’s temporary but, like, P3 are good. They’re not going to evict people or kick people out on the streets*”. He goes on to add that the accommodation is there “to help people get back to where they need to be” as he discusses the wrap-around support provided by P3. This maps to several of the short-term outcomes, including **supporting individuals to financial independence**, and **building new support networks**.

The contrast is clear in terms of the changes housing makes to lives. One resident talks about their time living on the street, speaking about being “*freezing cold*” and suffering verbal and physical abuse. He talks about getting a home through P3 as a “*relief*” and being “*delighted*” because it was “*clean and decent*”. Another adds:

*I’ve been here now, at the moment, 29 months. And I like it. I love it. You know, the area’s nice. Neighbours are lovely. Yeah. And it’s quiet, you know? And it’s helping me go forward.*

Another adds to this by mentioning the value of having personal space and autonomy: “*I just wanted to be on my own*”. These stories speak to the medium-term goal of **individuals being supported to work towards positive life outcomes**, as well as the above-mentioned short- and long-term outcomes. As in the other locations, security and stability are the necessary bedrock for all outcomes and a first step in reducing the chaos in people’s lives.

## “It’s just home and it’s, you know, you feel relaxed, ... which that’s brilliant” – Improving Mental Health and Wellbeing

As with the other providers, another significant change seen by residents was the improvement in their mental health and wellbeing, underpinned by the stability brought by housing. One resident summed up the feeling simply: “*It’s just home and it’s, you know, you feel relaxed, ... which that’s brilliant.*” This highlights just how pivotal having somewhere to call home is.

A big factor in the improvement of mental health and wellbeing outcomes was the level of wrap-around support residents received from P3 in addition to housing. One resident says how the support helps them feel less “*alone or nervous, anxious.*” Another resident details some of the ways in which they receive support:

*Supported accommodation people for support to help people get back to where they need to be. You know what I mean? Good health. Yeah. Good mental health. Social networking, everything like that. They... it is like they explore everything. ... It's pretty good. 'Cause some people don't have that and it's hard to find it. Yeah. And the, all the staff, I'm all nice and everything and when you do get to the last stage where I'm on now, they do pop in [once or twice] a week or something to check on you.*

Another resident mentions how improving their mental health is key to their reintegration into society: “*I've just gotta get my mind back in the game, which is coming back. I'm, I'm working on about, I'd say about 15 to 20% of what I was at the minute.*”

It's clear from the stories that the wrap-around support is a key component of the housing. It builds on that stable base that having a home offers and helps ensure more positive outcomes for people. This ties to the short-term outcomes of **signposting to better health outcomes** and **building new support networks**; the medium-term outcomes of **receiving support and engaging long term with physical and mental health needs**, and **individuals supported to work towards positive life outcomes**; and the long-term outcome of **reduction of incidence of on-street homelessness and incidences of reoccurring homelessness**. The approach combines housing with accessible support to help tackle some of the root causes of homelessness at the individual level.

### **“I manage my bills, tenancy, shopping and all that. I can do all that” – Increased Independence and Responsibility**

Of course, P3 don't want people to be reliant on support long-term, with the objective being to have residents become independent, so they can find education, employment, and be able to support themselves in permanent accommodation. This is reflected in the stories of residents, who highlight how increased independence and responsibility in their day-to-day lives is another significant change. This is part of the third stage of P3's support model, where individuals are preparing to move from temporary tenancy agreements to permanent homes. During this stage, there is a shift towards the residents taking financial responsibility for their home.

*My rent's covered for the, the property I'm in at the moment, but I have to pay all my bills. Gas, electric water, tv, license, council tax shopping, that kind of thing.*

*I have to pay me, me surcharges here. Mm-hmm. And then I've got me own little bills, like me board bond. Yeah. Which is £32 a month.*

*I manage my bills, [tenancy,] shopping and all that. I can do all that.*

It demonstrates a clear trajectory from the chaos of being unhoused, to feeling stable and secure enough to take financial responsibility for a property, and all that entails.

One resident in the later stages of the programme stresses that *“really, it’s only up to you to, like, keep building on it. ... You gotta help yourself”*. However, it is also important to note that this level of self-determination is underpinned by reliable, accessible support. The various storytellers noted that they had received help with various aspects of day-to-day living, such as help setting up Council Tax payments, assistance with benefits forms, navigating online systems and so on.

The stories here have linked to the short-term outcomes of **supporting individuals to financial independence** and **building of new support networks**; the medium-term outcome of **financial needs of client are improved**; and the long-term outcome of **reduction of incidence of on-street homelessness and incidences of reoccurring homelessness**. Again, the programme looks to tackle some of the root causes of reoccurring homelessness by ensuring people feel supported and secure.

## Conclusion

The Most Significant Change for P3’s Wolverhampton residents, based on the lived experience stories of residents, is the **security and stability** that their home and the accompanying support gives them.

Other notable changes include:

- Improved mental health
- Increased independence

We have mapped these changes to P3’s Theory of Change outcomes where relevant and have attached these to evidence from the stories gathered so far in Table 3.

**Table 3: P3, Wolverhampton Theory of Change outcomes mapped to evidence from gathered stories**

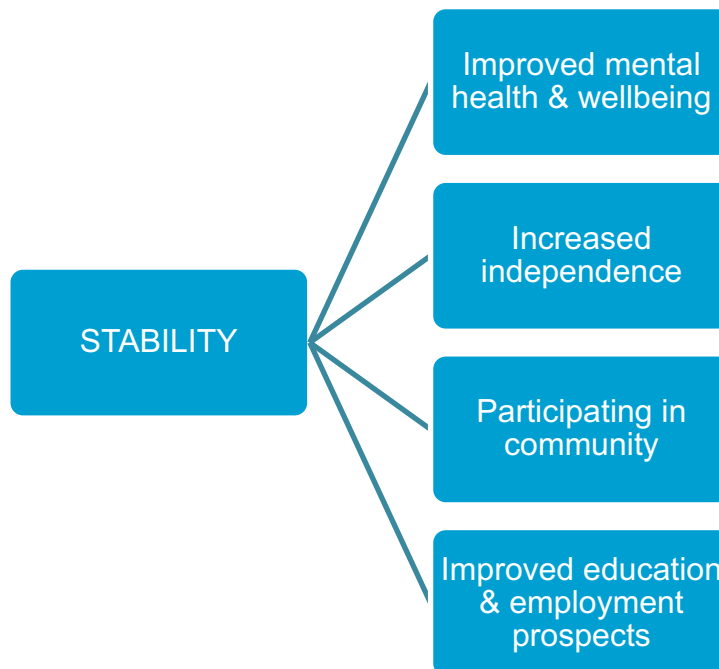
Outcomes	Direct quotes from stories
<b>Short-Term</b>	
High need clients matched to appropriate accommodation and support needs	When you’ve got somewhere to come, to call home, which they’ve [P3] provided, you’ve got a base.  Supported accommodation people for support to help people get back to where they need to be. You know what I mean?
Supporting individuals to financial independence	I manage my bills, [tenancy,] shopping and all that. I can do all that.

Signposting to better health outcomes	Good health. Yeah. Good mental health. Social networking, everything like that. They... it is like they explore everything.
<b>Mid-Term</b>	
Individuals being supported to work towards positive life outcomes	I've been here now, at the moment, 29 months. And I like it. I love it. You know, the area's nice. Neighbours are lovely. Yeah. And it's quiet, you know? And it's helping me go forward.  Really, it's only up to you to, like, keep building on it. ... You gotta help yourself
<b>Long-Term</b>	
Reduction in incidence of on-street homelessness and instances of recurring homelessness	"I know it's temporary but, like, P3 are good. They're not going to evict people or kick people out on the streets".
Receiving support and engaging long term with physical and mental health needs	"It's just home and it's, you know, you feel relaxed, ... which that's brilliant."

## Most Significant Change and Next Steps

It is clear from all three providers that the Most Significant Change of being given long-term housing is **stability**. There is a clear transition from the chaotic life that goes hand in hand with being homeless, to the stability and security of having a fixed address. Although the other changes people noted (improved mental health and wellbeing, increased independence, participation in community, improved education and employment prospects, etc.) are significant in and of themselves, they are all underpinned by stability (Diagram 5).

Diagram 5: Stability as Most Significant Change, underpinning other benefits of being housed



Stability is the foundation from which all other changes can grow and develop and it is a reoccurring theme in all of the stories. The housing provided under Everybody In is available (depending on the provider) on either a permanent or long-term temporary basis. This is vastly different from the range of short-term, unsecure accommodation that unhoused people often find offered to them (if at all). It gives the stability and security which underpins everything else.

We have used the findings of this report to produce a separate practice briefing for providers (Appendix), outlining ways in which future policy and practice might reflect and improve upon what residents in these three areas have told us. This has been accompanied by a knowledge exchange to discuss the briefing with providers directly.

## References

Brown, G., & Yule, G. (1983). *Discourse Analysis* (Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/CBO9780511805226

Durose, C, Mangan, C, Needham, C, Rees, J, (2013). *Transforming local public services through co-production*, Birmingham: AHRC Connected Communities / Department for Communities and Local Government / University of Birmingham, p22.

Geelhoed, S, Trowbridge, H, Henderson, S and Wallace-Thompson, L. "Changing the Story: An Alternative Approach to System Change in Public Service Innovation", *Polish Political Science Review*, vol.9, no.2, 2021, pp.52-70. <https://doi.org/10.2478/ppsr-2021-0012>

Glasby, J, (2011). *Evidence, policy and practice: Critical perspectives in health and social care*. Bristol, Policy Press.

Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Hawthorne, NY: Aldine de Gruyter.

Keresztély, K and Trowbridge H. 2019. 'Voicitys: Living with Diversity in European Cities' *CESCI Cross-Border Review Yearbook*, James Scott (ed).

Labonte R., Feather J. (1996) *Handbook on using stories in health promotion practice*, Regina, SK: Prairie Region Health Promotion Researcher Centre, University of Saskatchewan.

Lévy, Pierre. (1997). *Collective Intelligence: Mankind's Emerging World in Cyberspace*. Cambridge, Mass: Perseus Books.

Snowden, D and Boone, M. (2007) *A leader's framework for decision making*. Harvard business review, 85(11), p.68.

Trowbridge, H & Willoughby, M (2020) 'Connecting Voices, Challenging Perspectives and Catalysing Change: Using storytelling as a tool for co-creation in public services across Europe' in *CESCI Cross-Border Review Yearbook*, James Scott (ed). Central European Service For Cross-Border Initiatives.

Tummers, L., & Karsten, N. (2012). Reflecting on the Role of Literature in Qualitative Public Administration Research: Learning From Grounded Theory. *Administration & Society*, 44(1), 64–86.

## Appendix: Practice recommendations

### Executive Summary

This policy brief presents the case that people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness benefit most from a person-centred approach that prioritises long-term stability and security.

**Key finding:** Long-term housing combined with person-centred support offers stability, which is the change required to underpin all further positive changes for the person.

This finding underpins our recommendations, which are aimed at policy- and decision-makers in the area of housing and homelessness, especially housing providers.

### Introduction

The Everyone In Social Investment Pilot contributes to five social investment funds run by three Fund Managers, all of which work with local not-for-profit providers of accommodation and services for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The funds help these Providers with the purchase of existing housing in partnership with local not-for-profit organisations and providing homes and support for people experiencing homelessness.

This briefing focuses on the experiences of some of those people, particularly the ways in which being housed made changes in their lives. It presents practical recommendations for policy makers and providers as to **how to implement a person-centred approach that offers stability and security to people.**

### Key Insights

The key insights to come out of the stories reveal that their housing has created several tangible changes for people. Although this was manifold, it is clear from the conversations that there are three particularly significant changes:

#### Stability

“When you’ve got somewhere to come, to call home, which they’ve provided, you’ve got a base.” – *Wolverhampton resident.*

Stability was identified as the Most Significant Change, which underpinned all others. Being housed begins a shift away from the chaos of being homeless and provides a solid foundation for everything that follows.

#### Improved mental health and wellbeing

“I’ve tried to kill myself before but now I don’t think like this because I’m very happy.” – *Lewisham resident.*

Many storytellers reported a marked improvement in mental health and wellbeing due to a combination of stability, increased independence, security, and access to support and services.

## Feeling supported

“My key worker, I wouldn't change in a month of Sundays. Best thing since sliced bread.” – *Sheffield resident*.

Support is a big part of Everyone In, with residents having access to support workers who have helped in a variety of ways: addiction recovery, help with financial management, independent living, finding education and employment, and just being a reliable person in the storyteller's life. It's a big part of feeling stable and secure for many residents.

## Recommendations

The following are recommendations **policy and practice** that housing providers and homelessness support services could adopt based on the learnings from this evaluation.

- **Develop** person-centred, strengths-based approaches that treat people as individuals with unique support needs, rather than trying to shoehorn people into standardised processes that may not work for them.
- **Provide** long-term homes and support, not short-term accommodation, to allow people to live independently and to minimise the risk of them becoming homeless again after a relatively short period.
- **Ask** whether what you do provides stability by implementing regular participatory evaluation (using tools such as Ripple Effect Mapping) that prioritises qualitative data based on lived experience, not just numbers.

## Method

Originating in 2007, Community Reporting has been developed across Europe as a mixed methodological approach for enhancing citizen participation in research, policymaking, service development, and decision-making processes. In-line with work such as Glasby (2011) Community Reporting purports the validity of lived experience and knowledge-based practice in these fields. It uses digital, portable technologies to support people to tell their own stories in their own ways and then connects these stories with change-makers in different settings and sectors.

The evidence that has informed this briefing has come from Community Reporter stories from people who have experienced homelessness and have been housed in homes provided via the Everyone In Social Investment Pilot, discussing Most Significant Change being housed has had on their lives. This work has been **in partnership with the Policy Evaluation & Research Unit at MMU** and took place between 2023 and 2025, looking at 15 stories.

## About People's Voice Media

**People's Voice Media** is a civil society organisation established in 1995, that uses storytelling as a tool for social change in the UK and across Europe. In 2007 we launched the Community Reporting methodology and began to build the **Community Reporter Network**. The Community Reporter Network now spans the UK and Europe, with 50+ active partner organisations from different sectors in the arenas of policy, research and services.



**Head Office:** The Fort Offices, Artillery Business Park, Park Hall, Oswestry, Shropshire, SY11 4AD.

**Email:** [enquiries@peoplesvoicemedia.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@peoplesvoicemedia.co.uk)

**Website:** <https://peoplesvoicemedia.co.uk>

**Company No:**3083575

**Charity No:**1059681

This work is supported by **Esmée Fairbairn Foundation**.

## References

Glasby, J., 2011. *Evidence, policy and practice: Critical perspectives in health and social care*. Bristol: Policy Press.

## Contact

**Visit:** <https://peoplesvoicemedia.co.uk>

**Email:** [enquiries@peoplesvoicemedia.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@peoplesvoicemedia.co.uk)