



**Strategic Plan**  
**Sept 2024 to Sept 2026**

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# Providing Shelter & Support For Young People Since 1984



## Vision

Empowering young people to make informed choices about issues affecting their lives and enabling them to build brighter futures

## Mission

To provide shelter and support for vulnerable and often homeless young people

## Core Values



**Empowerment**



**Equality of Opportunity**



**Kindness**

## Method

### Compassion



To treat everyone with respect, dignity and understanding

### Education



Create opportunities for young people to learn, practice and increase their skills

### Safeguarding



Following best practice to provide a safe environment for everyone

### Participation



Supporting young people to express their views and influence matters that concern them

## Background

Streetlife is an ecumenical youth work charity established by the town centre churches of Blackpool and was registered as a charity in 1984. The charity works within a Christian ethos which embraces young people from all backgrounds.

Its purpose is to provide support and shelter for vulnerable and often homeless young people aged 16-25 in Blackpool and surrounding areas. Streetlife aims to enable and empower young people to make informed choices about their situation and issues affecting their lives.

Streetlife currently operates from 2 locations:

- The Nighshelter in St Johns Square, which has 8 beds providing emergency short term accommodation, hot meals, showering and washing facilities and is open 24/7, 365 days a year.
- The Base at 48 Buchanan St which is open 5 days a week for young people to drop in and access practical, emotional and educational support.

Key facts regarding performance and scale of delivery are that in 2023:

- Nightshelter occupancy was 90%, compared to 75% in 2022
- The base had 323 individual young people access, over 6,479 visits
- 200 counselling sessions attended
- 28 LifeSkill & AQA qualifications gained
- 312 Cook & Eat sessions attended
- Over 500 emergency parcels provided (Food & Toiletries)

## Insight and Learning

The changes to the economic climate over 2022/3, including the rising costs of rents and the cost-of-living crisis have had a significant impact on our service users. We have extended our service in both locations to support the growing need not only to provide emergency accommodation but also to support young people once housed and living in poverty. 26% of vulnerable young people have £20 or less left each month after rent and bills, leaving them to live off £5 or less a week. 30% of vulnerable young people often go without food for a whole day because they don't have enough money. (Centrepoin food insecurity report 2023)

The needs of our service users have become increasingly complex with the majority experiencing multiple disadvantages including serious mental health conditions, learning needs and disabilities. MEAM (making every adult matter) research shows 336,000 individuals in England face at least three out of four of life's harshest disadvantages – homelessness, substance misuse, ill mental health and violence/abuse.

Due to the economic climate, there has become a bottle neck in move on temporary/supported housing in the area, making it more difficult to move young people on from the nightshelter. **ADD HOUSING JUSTICE PIECE HERE**

The external climate of 2022/3 resulted in us increasing the opening hours in both locations, which requires more staffing and a higher reliance on a core team. We are providing more help with basic needs such as meals, food parcels and washing of clothes. We are more inclusive than ever and are dealing with more complex needs such as mental health, addiction, care leavers, trans issues, learning needs, neurodiversity, domestic violence, born into care and safeguarding.

The following cohorts are overrepresented within our service – care leavers, the trans community and neurodiverse individuals. Government research shows an increase of 33% of care leavers faced homelessness in 2022/23 compared to 2018. Research from Stonewall shows that 1 in 5 LGB individuals have experienced homelessness and 1 in 4 trans people. Homeless Link report that it is thought 1 in 7 people in the UK are neurodivergent. There is strong evidence from studies that adults with autism are overrepresented among those experiencing homelessness. Many characteristics of neurodiversity make those individuals without support at much higher risk of becoming homeless.

## Insight and Learning

This has resulted in us becoming more trauma informed and our team requiring a higher level of training and more varied skill set. We are doing more lived experience training, life skills education, therapy and counselling. Due to the demand on resources, we are doing fewer external trips, Duke of Edinburgh Awards and activities.

Volunteer recruitment has become increasingly difficult across the board over the last 2 years, with 61% of UK charities struggling to recruit and 47% have not seen an increase in 12 months. (Nottingham Trent Uni VCSE report) Due to the complex needs and vulnerability of our service users we implement a strict safer recruitment policy which requires a DBS check and references for each volunteer. This reduces our ability to utilise the offers of ad hoc volunteers in a meaningful way, as there are limited roles that do not involve direct contact with our young people.

Changing Futures Blackpool, a programme funded by the Department of Levelling Up Homes and Communities asked Streetlife to pilot a Y-LET (young lived experience team) scheme in 23/24. This involved supporting and training young people with lived experience of multiple disadvantage to become peer mentors. This has been very successful locally with the older age group however, we experienced some challenges that prevented the continuation of the scheme.

The challenges impacted on young people's ability to sustain the role due to;

- Unable to commit to significant volunteering hours as it impacted on their benefits and ability to find work
- Accessing education, employment and training
- Travelling

To ensure an understanding of the external environment it is vital that we continue to network and collaborate with partners and statutory bodies. This will provide us with the information to keep our service relevant in the current climate.

Some examples of the partnerships we are involved in are:

### National

Centrepont  
Homeless Link  
Frontline Network  
Housing Justice

### Local

Blackpool Homeless Partnership  
Fylde Coast Multiple Disadvantage  
Mental Health Partnership Board  
Supported Housing Improvement Group  
Inter Agency Risk Management  
SPARKS Network

Given the economic climate and increased demand for our service it is vital that we continue to consistently do what we do, and to do it well.

## Strategic Objectives

Based on the insights, learnings, best practice across the sector and feedback from funders we have identified the need to prioritise the following areas for development over the next 2 years.

| No. | Target   | Lead              |
|-----|--|-------------------|
| 1.  | Sustain the current offer                                    | Jane Hugo         |
| 2.  | Improve marketing so presence and offer is more widely known | Kim Hughes        |
| 3.  | Increase the involvement of young people                     | Rob Swarbrick     |
| 4.  | Develop an approach to demonstrate impact                    | Ashleigh Walmsley |

## Implications & Implementation

The operational implications in achieving each of the objectives are considered in the appendices to this document as a series of action plans. Each action plan is used by the team to focus resource and staff input to achieving that objective as efficiently as possible, whilst being mindful of the need to continue regular operations.

The objectives will form the basis of supervisions, monthly management meetings and operational team meetings. The lead will be expected to work with young people, staff, volunteers and stakeholders in the development of each objective.

The lead will report on the progress of their strategic objective to the management committee on a quarterly basis. The management committee and leads will hold an annual review in September 2025 and a final review in September 2026.



# Objective 1: Sustain Offer

## Requirements

- Define full cost of delivering the service and what alternative versions could look like
- Develop a fundraising plan to meet the identified costs
- Staff retention
- Increase volunteers

## Actions

- |  |                                   |                       |                           |
|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Costings for various opening times at the nightshelter | Consider scope of housing benefit | Valuing staff         | Volunteer recruitment     |
| Costings for various opening times at the base         | Identify grant funders            | Support & Supervision | Marketing                 |
| Costings options appraisal                             | Explore other sources of finance  | Staff training        | Induction days & training |
| VYW Cost analysis                                      |                                   | Shared identity       | Safer recruitment         |
| Staff costs from general fund                          |                                   | Appraisals            | Celebration events        |
| SWOT   |                                   | Wellbeing             | Value volunteers          |
|  |                                   |                       | Supervision & support     |



# Objective 2: Marketing Strategy

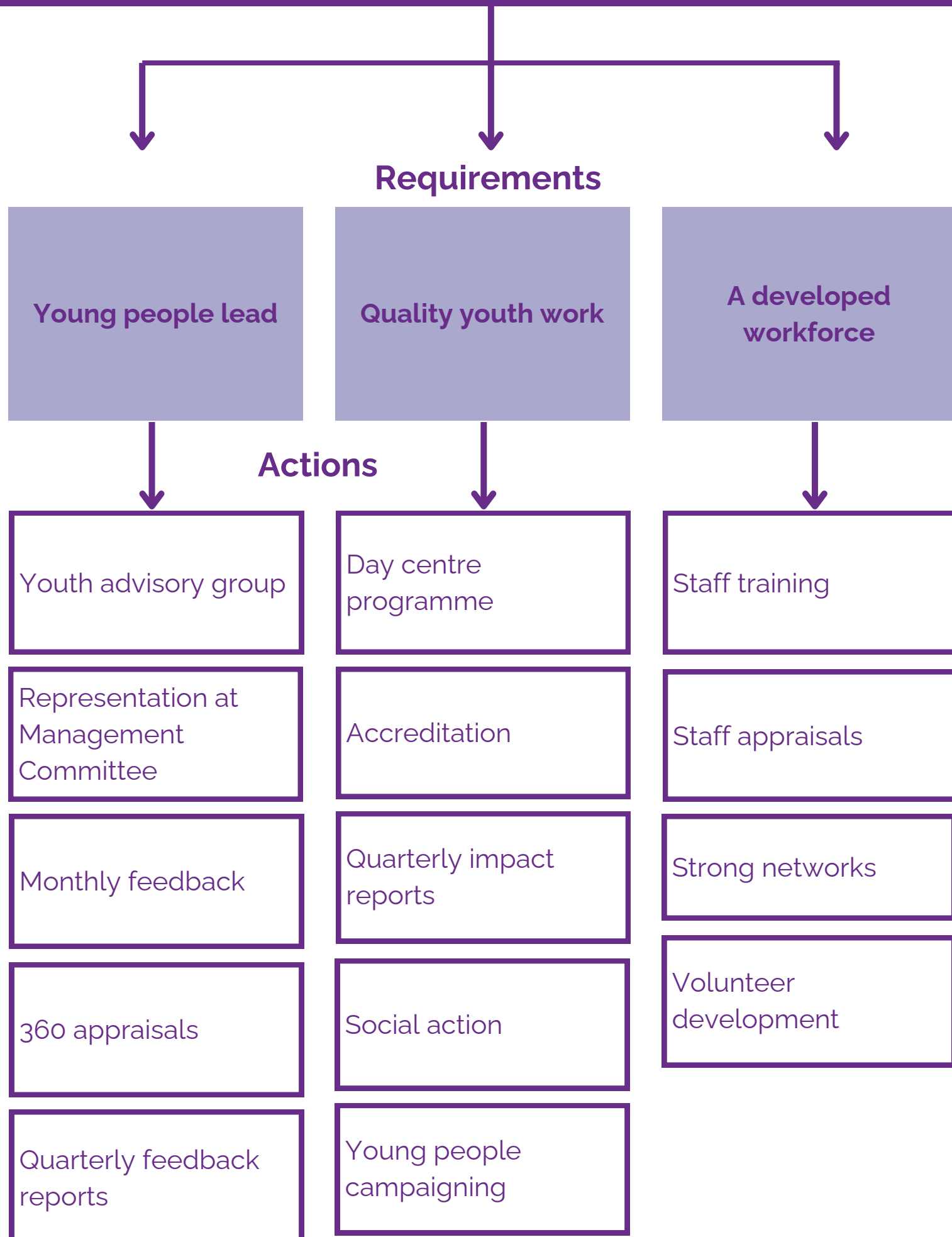
## Requirements

- Manage Sleepout marketing in house
- Provide a consistent professional message to funders
- Engage existing and potential supporters
- Ensure young people are aware of the service and how to access

## Actions

- Create branded and recognisable artwork
- Curate marketing timeline for the sign up campaign
- Identify and use promotion via best ROI
- Scope and plan investment in targeted Meta campaign
- Use our own website for sign ups to track supporter journey data
- Utilise the mailing list in targeted groups
- Evaluate using data
- Ensure our website is current and relevant
- Ensure vision, mission, core values and methods are clearly themed throughout
- Strong branded themes throughout all marketing and socials
- Consistency and identity in all external comms
- Seek feedback from funders
- Clearly demonstrate the need for our service and benefit to young people
- Monthly blog post on website
- Quarterly newsletters
- Maintain and increase social media engagement across all channels
- Praise and thank supporters in most appropriate way for them
- Shout about our successes
- Report & review
- Create engaging designs aimed at 16-25 year olds
- Increase presence on age targeted platforms eg Insta/Tiktok
- Physical marketing in specific local places frequented by our demographic
- Network with local partners to increase their awareness for signposting
- Attend local relevant events eg college days
- Explore feasibility of paid marketing eg Bus Adverts
- Measure using YP surveys

## Objective 3: Young People Lead The Work



## Objective 4: Demonstrate Impact

