

YOUR IMPACT

SPRING UPDATE 2025

**CENTRE
POINT**

ENDING YOUTH
HOMELESSNESS



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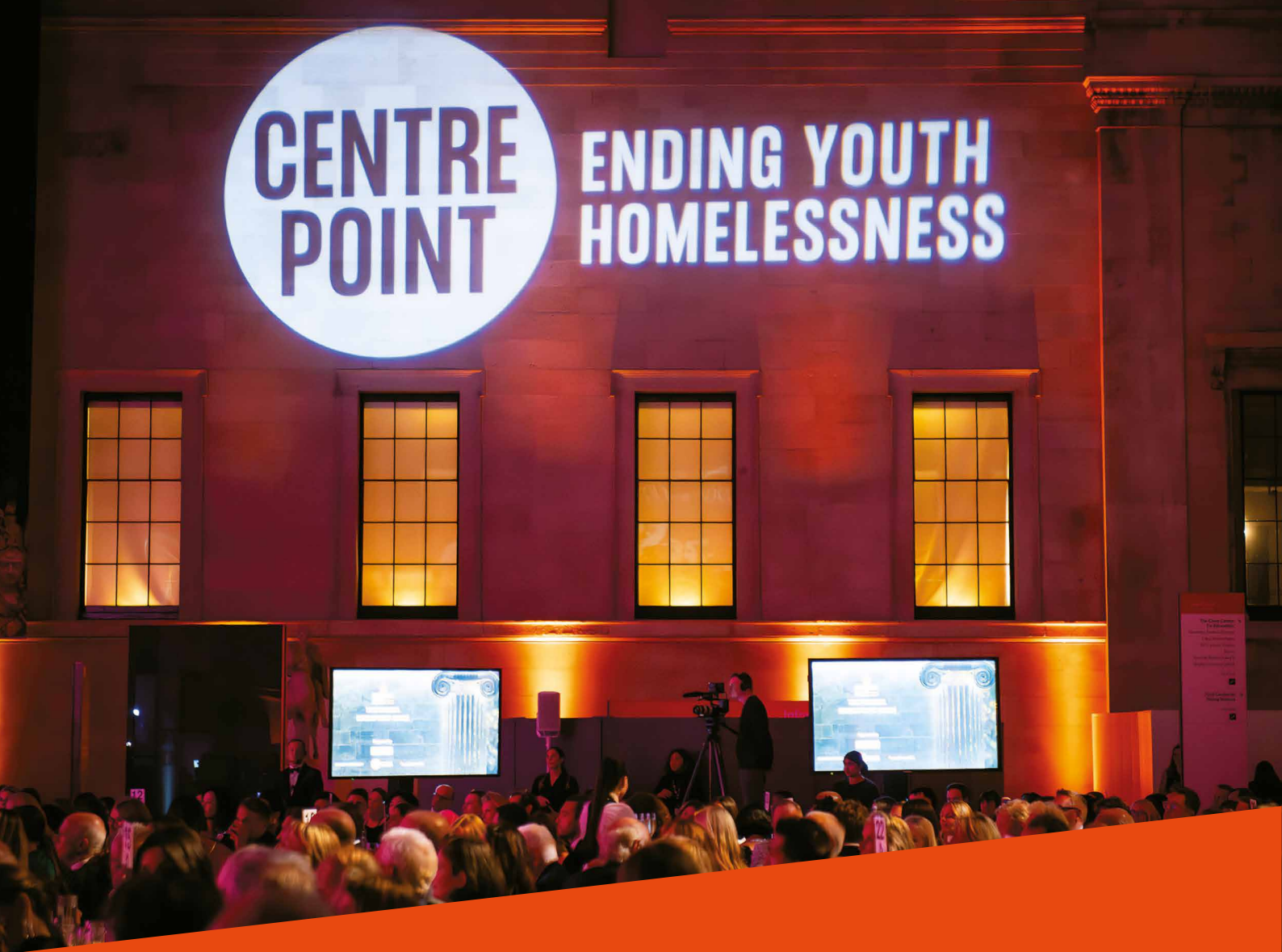
Why the
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Centrepont Awards:
meet the inspiring
finalists



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If you feel moved by any of the stories in this issue of Your Impact, we would love to hear from you. You can email us at supportercare@centrepoint.org or call us on 0800 23 23 20.

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR



Hello, I'm the Policy and Research Manager at Centrepoint and my team is responsible for advocating for policy change and undertaking high quality research.

Firstly, I wanted to thank you for continuing to support Centrepoint. You may remember me from the last edition of Your Impact newsletter when I wrote to you about our hopes for the new government – after over 250 days since the election, I wanted to give you another update.

The Labour Party victory at the General Election in July 2024 has increased the need for well-evidenced, high quality youth homelessness policy and research. This is particularly vital as, since the 2019 General Election, rates of youth homelessness have increased by 12% – meaning that over 500,000 young people faced homelessness over the course of the last parliament. Centrepoint believes that the new government must rise to the challenge of implementing policies that will reverse this trend – ensuring that, by the end of this parliament, we no longer experience another significant rise in youth homelessness.

So far, the new government has showed signs of promise. They have announced their Get Britain Working White Paper, which includes the Youth Guarantee – a potentially vital policy that could support many vulnerable young people to access employment, education and training. They have also removed the social housing local connection test for care leavers - increasing access to genuinely affordable housing for a group that is often at high risk of homelessness. Finally, they have committed to developing a homelessness strategy targeted at ending all forms of homelessness – a plan that, we hope, will include specific approaches to ending youth homelessness.

My team is working to influence policy makers at all levels to ensure that the new government follows through on these early policy wins and implements further change that will support vulnerable young people. However, we cannot do this alone. We need your support to make the case to the government that they must address youth homelessness and ensure that every young person leads a meaningful life.

I hope that you enjoy reading this issue of Your Impact, and thank you for continuing to support the incredible work being done across Centrepoint.

Dr Tom Kerridge
Policy and Research Manager



Since the 2019 General Election, rates of youth homelessness have increased by 12% – meaning that over 500,000 young people faced homelessness over the course of the last parliament.

LISA'S STORY:

CENTREPOINT BECAME MY FAMILY

Lisa travelled alone from Vietnam to the UK at just 12-years-old. She remembers having no understanding of what was happening to her. "I didn't know the people that took me," she reflects. "I didn't even know I would go to the UK. It was a frightening experience." After arriving in the UK, Lisa was in foster care for six years until she reached 18 and social services referred her into supported housing with Centrepont.

Lisa soon settled in and felt safe and seen by staff members. She explains that having the support and advice of her key worker was vital during that period. Whilst at Centrepont, Lisa completed her A-levels, securing a place at her first choice of university to study Nutrition, Exercise and Health. She was supported by the Centrepont Works team throughout the process.

The Centrepont Bursary also helped Lisa throughout the duration of her degree. She explains. "It's been a lifesaver and meant I didn't have to worry about where my next meal would come from."

Lisa recently graduated with a First Class Honours and is immensely grateful for the support she received from Centrepont at a difficult period in her life. "We aren't an easy group to work with," Lisa reflects. "We have gone through so much at an early stage in our lives and therefore at times we can be challenging to deal with. However, staff are always there to provide support and are so proud of our achievements. When I got my A-level grades [A, A*, A*] and my place at uni they were all so happy for me. They were jumping up and down. The Service Manager gave me a big hug. I feel like they were like my parents because they were so proud of me."

"My key worker was amazing. She was so patient and helped me in so many ways. I was still in sixth form at the time and she would attend my parent meetings with me. She basically filled the role of parent and was there for me with whatever I needed."

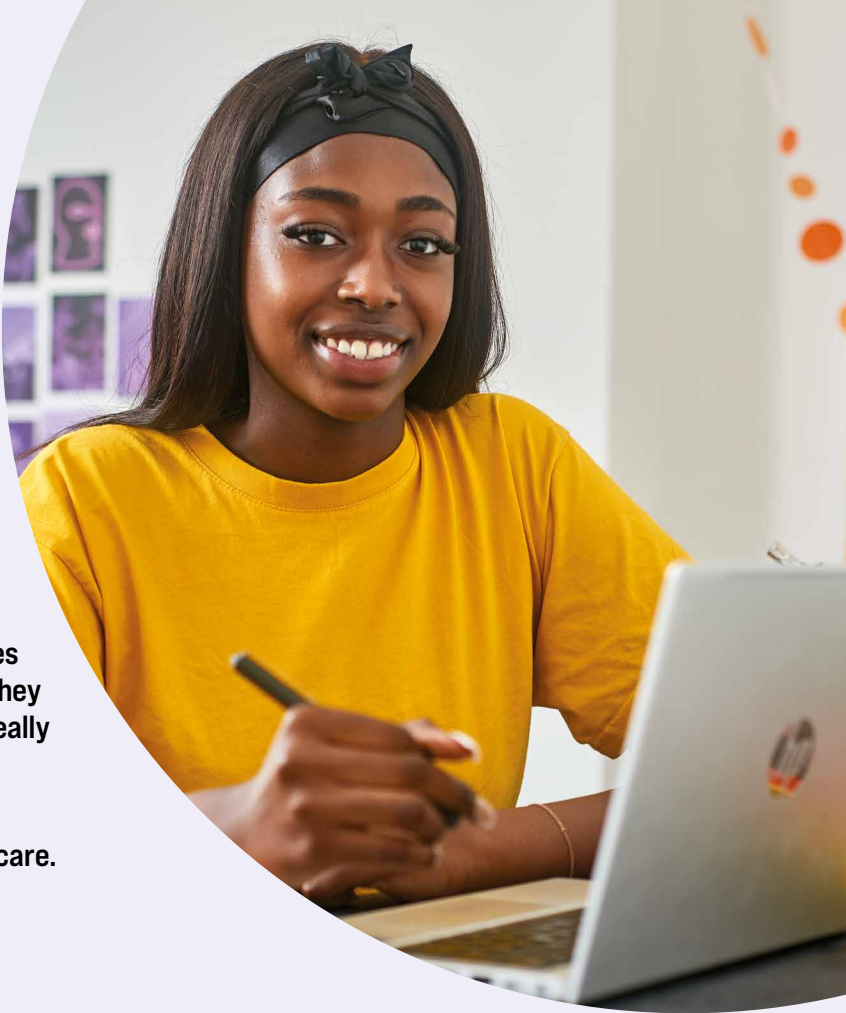
Lisa

Your ongoing support makes stories like Lisa's possible – thank you so much.

CREATING
SAFE
SPACES

Your incredible support is helping provide safe homes for young people – a nurturing environment where they can finally let their guard down, find out who they really are, and what they could become.

Here are six ways our services create a secure and peaceful environment for the young people in their care.



1. **PERSONALISED BEDROOMS**

We encourage young people to customise their space and choose a duvet from a selection of eight different colours. Although it might seem like a small detail, these acts of agency and choice make a young person feel seen as an individual and more in control of their environment.
2. **WELCOMING COMMUNAL SPACES**

Meeting others who have faced similar challenges in life shows a young person they're not alone. But it's also important to make room for friendship and fun! So we have cheerful communal spaces filled with beanbags and a big television for gaming and movie nights.
3. **ESTABLISHING ROUTINES**

Many of the young people at Centrepont have experienced chaotic home lives that felt unstable and ever-changing. So establishing routines can be incredibly healing for a young person, giving them a sense of calm and continuity at last.
4. **SETTING BOUNDARIES**

House rules are important to make sure all of our young people can feel safe, secure and respected in their home. Rules range from keeping our spaces smoke free, to speaking to each other in a kind and non-judgemental way – staff follow these rules too!
5. **SHARING MEALS FROM ALL CULTURES**

We welcome young people from all backgrounds. Some even come to us as unaccompanied refugees. By cooking together in our kitchens, young people can share a taste of home. Our services also mark culturally important holidays like Christmas and Eid al-Fitr with a special spread for everyone to enjoy.
6. **RESTORATIVE OUTSIDE SPACES**

Spending time outside is good for you – and it's great for mental health too. So we encourage everyone to enjoy our gardens, and help tend to the plants if they'd like to. Caring for other living things can be really therapeutic for a young person who has experienced neglect or trauma.



RESEARCH REPORT: THE HOUSING SYSTEM IS BROKEN

We all know there is a serious shortage of affordable housing in the UK. But not many people know that this shortage disproportionately affects homeless young people. Centrepont have carried out extensive research to better understand the problem and propose solutions.

These findings are based on a survey of frontline staff at 30 organisations supporting young people and on interviews carried out with local authority staff and homeless young people themselves.

89%

said that the cost of renting in the private rented sector is an extreme barrier for homeless young people.



NEARLY ALL

young people and stakeholders who were interviewed highlighted that benefits discrimination from landlords was an obstacle to accessing private rented accommodation.



There was a
9%

increase in the general need for one-bedroom social homes - the type of homes that the majority of young people with experiences of homelessness will likely access.



78%

reported that young people have become somewhat or much less able to afford their rent in the past year.



84%

of survey respondents said the need for a guarantor and to pay rent upfront are extreme barriers for young people trying to move on into the private rented sector.



**OVER
1 in 3**

young people said that damp and mould were an issue in the social homes offered to them.



BUT BROKEN SYSTEMS CAN BE REDESIGNED

Here are some of our key recommendations to give vulnerable young people fairer access to housing:

- Incentivise the development of more social homes, with a particular focus on studio and one-bedroom homes.
- Ban the requirement of guarantors.
- Ensure that homeless young people are considered a priority for social housing.
- Swiftly amend the Renters (Reform) Bill to outlaw income discrimination, so that young people on benefits can access the private rented sector. Additionally, the government must ensure that this ban is regulated and landlords are held accountable.

Thanks to supporters like you, Centrepont is able to provide over 850 homeless young people with supported accommodation each year.

Scan the QR code or visit centrepont.org.uk/housing to read the full report.



REMEMBERING ANNIE

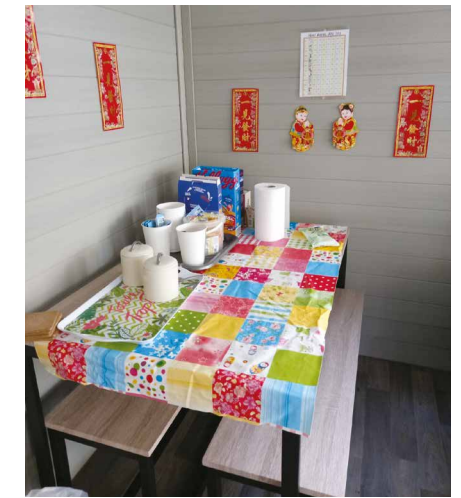


Annie came to Centrepont at a pivotal moment in their life. Known as Jae to their friends, they found more than just accommodation – they discovered a space where they could truly be themselves. Though their life was tragically cut short just before their 21st birthday, Annie's impact on those around them continues through a legacy that embodies their spirit of finding belonging and community.

From a young age, Annie struggled to connect with their peers. They showed traits of autism and, with Centrepont's support, were pursuing a formal diagnosis before their passing. They also suffered with an underactive thyroid, known as hypothyroidism, which caused significant physical and emotional challenges. Annie was often bullied at school and felt a lot of shame about their condition.

Despite these challenges, Annie was always fiercely loyal to their loved ones. In their late teens, they found a close-

knit group of neurodivergent and LGBTQ+ friends who truly understood and accepted them, allowing Annie to fully embrace and enjoy life. And, with the help of their key worker at Centrepont, Paul, Annie found their own independence.



Annie's Annex, decorated for the recent Lunar New Year celebrations, is a warm and welcoming space where residents can find comfort, connection, and a sense of belonging – continuing the spirit of belonging and friendship that meant so much to Annie.

Katie, Annie's mother said, **"Annie was in a really good place at the time of their passing. They were ready to take off. I was so proud of them. They had no debts, no loans, and no credit cards. They had found their tribe, and they were mature and independent. I can't thank the staff enough for what they did to support them."**

Around this time, Annie came out as bisexual and transgender. Many of their friends called them Jae, a name their family learned about only after their death.

Annie's exploration of their identity marked a turning point when they attended their first Pride event, proudly dyeing their hair in rainbow colours – an act symbolic of their self-acceptance.

Liz, the Centrepont service manager, remembers Annie fondly. **"They were a quiet, unassuming young person but once they'd got to know staff, they would spend time chatting in the office. Annie was known for their ever-changing hair colour and, when I saw the aurora borealis recently, I thought of Annie."**

Annie's desire for a normal teenage life often conflicted with their health needs. Their medication meant they always needed to be near a toilet, and, as Annie grew older, it became increasingly difficult to manage.

Sadly, it was severe complications from their hyperthyroidism that led to Annie's premature death.

Losing Annie was devastating for Katie, who wanted to honour her child's memory in a way that reflected their spirit. She channelled her grief into fundraising for 'Annie's Annex', a communal space for residents at Centrepont – something the service Annie lived in had desperately needed.

"My mum passed away a few months before Annie did. Annie was really close to her and had a tattoo of some yellow roses, their nan's favourite flowers. When my mum got cancer, Annie helped me to care for her. It's fitting therefore that some of the inheritance from my mum goes towards creating a legacy for Annie."

The idea for Annie's Annex came from a conversation with the service manager, Liz. Together, they decided that creating a communal space for residents would be a fitting legacy. Annie often felt isolated before finding their tribe and the support of Centrepont, and Katie hopes that this space will foster

the same kind of friendships and sense of belonging that transformed Annie's life. Although Annie's life was tragically cut short, Annie's Annex now stands as a place of connection, support, and hope for young residents – ensuring their story inspires and brings comfort to those in need.

"We always try to find something positive in the hardest time. Annie's Annex is our rainbow after the storm. Whenever we see a rainbow, we think of Annie and the joy they brought to our lives."

Katie reflects on her hopes for Annie's legacy and the impact she wishes to make through sharing their story: **"I want Centrepont to be celebrated for their amazing work, and I want to raise awareness about Annie's condition. It's often ignored, but if one person gets diagnosed, then something good has come from our loss."**

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT MEMORY GIVING

Losing a loved one is incredibly difficult, but, like Katie, you can honour their memory by supporting Centrepont in a way that creates a lasting impact. Whether you take part in an event, organise your own fundraiser, lend your skills as a volunteer, leave a gift in your Will, or make a regular donation in your loved one's memory, your support can help change the lives of young people facing homelessness.

Visit centrepont.org.uk/memory-giving
or email the team at memorygiving@centrepont.org

A lasting legacy - Annie's Annex stands as a tribute to their resilience, friendships, and vibrant spirit.

CAMPAIGNING UPDATE: MAKE WORK PAY

Centrepoint regularly campaigns to influence government policy. This past year, we have been doing this through the Make Work Pay campaign.

The campaign sought to end the cap on benefits that prevent homeless young people from becoming truly independent. Young people in supported accommodation are effectively blocked from working more than a minimum number of hours – leaving them unemployed and struggling to escape homelessness. When a young person earns more than £132.78 a week, they lose their Universal Credit. This disincentivises work above a certain number of hours, and in some cases, getting a job at all. The cap is both limiting for young people, as well as for the Treasury.

Our research team estimated that amendments to the policy could see the Treasury save £4 million a year from the increased tax revenue and decreased benefit payments generated by young people working more hours.

Over the course of the campaign, 3,693 of our supporters, including many of you, took an action, whether emailing their local MP asking them to prioritise combatting homelessness, or signing the open letter written to the Chancellor Rachel Reeves, asking for reform to the benefits system.

It was amazing to see so many of you taking part, striving to create positive change. Sadly, the cap remained in place following

the Autumn budget. Despite this, the campaign achieved a deeper commitment from the Department for Work and Pensions to re-assess how effective policies on Universal Credit and Housing Benefit are for those in supported accommodation, particularly the Make Work Pay challenge we raised. Stronger partnerships have been built with the Department of Work and Pensions and we are hopeful campaigning will achieve a policy win in the Autumn Budget 2025.

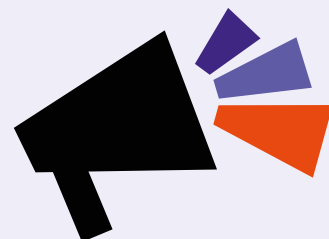
HERE'S SOME OF THE CHANGES WE'VE SEEN:

Measures to reform the welfare system have been pledged, ensuring that this system truly serves those in need.

New investment of more than £5 billion in the housing supply demonstrates the government's commitment to increase the supply of affordable houses.

£233 million in additional local authority funding has been committed to being spent tackling rough sleeping and homelessness.

You can find more information about our new campaign, No Young Person Left Out, on the back page. Get involved today!



EMPLOYER GUIDANCE TO SUPPORT YOUNG PEOPLE

A crucial step in breaking the cycle of homelessness is through employment opportunities – these allow young people to develop their skills and confidence, all whilst building a more stable future for themselves.

Employers play a pivotal role in ensuring that young people can access and thrive in employment. Centrepoint works with and is supported by a host of employers every year, many of whom provide vital work opportunities to the young people we support. We now need more employers to recruit young people who have experienced homelessness and support them to move up the career ladder.

We have developed a best practice guide which outlines key changes that employers can make to improve recruitment and employment practices for homeless young people.

WE RECOMMEND EMPLOYERS:

Work in partnership – build connections with charities and other relevant organisations to be able to provide comprehensive support to homeless young people in the workforce.

Improve access to work for homeless young people – expand available opportunities by offering entry-level roles, work experience placements, and improve recruitment and employment practices to be more inclusive.

Support young people at risk of or experiencing homelessness – provide a variety of internal and external support for homeless young people.

Provide training & development opportunities – support homeless young people to further their career development.

Encourage staff to engage in fundraising to support the wider goal to end youth homelessness – employers can help to reduce barriers to work by ensuring that no future young person experiences homelessness.

Please do share with your employers and teams – together we can end youth homelessness.

Scan the QR code or visit centrepoint.org.uk/employer-guidance to access the full guide.



CELEBRATING RESILIENCE AND ACHIEVEMENT

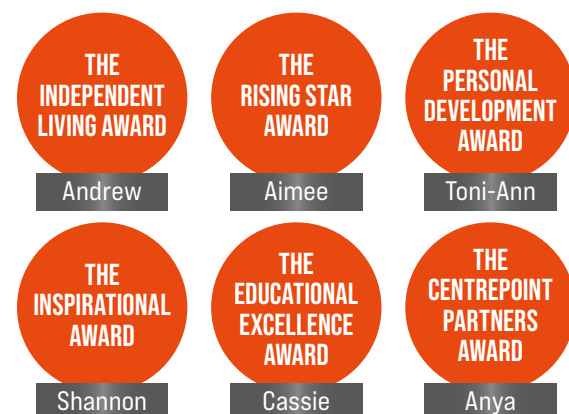


HRH Prince William, CEO Seyi Obakin OBE and the young Centrepunkt award recipients.

At London's iconic British Museum, the Centrepunkt Awards and Gala 2024 recognised the achievements of six extraordinary young people. This unforgettable event was a testament to the determination of all the young people you currently support, and the transformative power people like you, and our partners, create.

We thank **Mrs Debra Reuben**, Centrepunkt's Global Ambassador and Chair of the Gala, whose incredible efforts were instrumental in making the night a real success. Her ongoing support over the last ten years has inspired countless individuals to join the cause and drive meaningful change.

The Awards presented and winners on the night were:



Each winner's story stood as a beacon of hope, showcasing the profound impact of your support. Their achievements are a reminder of what is possible when young people are given the support they need to thrive.

We were deeply honoured to welcome our Patron, **HRH The Prince of Wales**, who not only spent time with the winners and other young people, but also presented the awards. His presence added a profound sense of occasion, and his heartfelt speech during dinner underscored the importance of systemic change to address youth homelessness. His call to action was a rallying cry for all present to continue championing this cause.

Adding to the evening's excitement were exclusive performances by a stellar line-up of talent. Rising artist **Joe Devlin** delivered a captivating show-opener, including a moving duet with a former Centrepunkt young person, **Toni-Ann**. The soulful voices of **Beverley Knight** and **Rag'n'Bone Man** left the audience spellbound, while **Dara O'Briain** brought laughter with his brilliant comedy set. The evening was masterfully hosted by the incomparable **Claudia Winkleman**, whose warmth made the night truly special.

Thanks to the generosity of our attendees and the incredible efforts of everyone involved, the event raised an astonishing **£1.2 million**. These vital funds will directly support Centrepunkt's mission to end youth homelessness and also build new **Independent Living** homes, providing young people with the safety and security they deserve so they can focus on achieving their potential.

We also thank our main sponsor, **Nationwide Building Society**, for their continuous support in making the night such a success, and all the generous Awards sponsors, donors and volunteers who's support contributed to the night.

The Centrepunkt Awards and Gala 2024 was more than just a celebration; it was a powerful reminder of the collective effort required to end youth homelessness.

Every story shared, every award presented, and every pound raised brings us closer to ensuring that all young people have a safe place to call home and the opportunities they deserve.



Centrepunkt CEO, Seyi Obakin OBE and Claudia Winkleman.

CENTREPOINT AWARDS: MEET THE INSPIRING FINALISTS

ELI'S STORY:

20-year-old Eli became homeless following a family breakdown and slept rough for a short time before requesting a referral to Centrepunkt. Since then, he has been supported by the Centrepunkt Works team and the Centrepunkt Bursary to support his catering and hospitality apprenticeship. He hopes one day to open his own restaurant.

Eli was nominated by both his Jobs, Education and Training Advisor, Michelle, and key worker, Emma, for a 2024 Centrepunkt Award to recognise the amazing progress he has made. He was a finalist and met Centrepunkt's Patron, Prince William. He says this was an unforgettable experience.



CASSIE'S STORY:

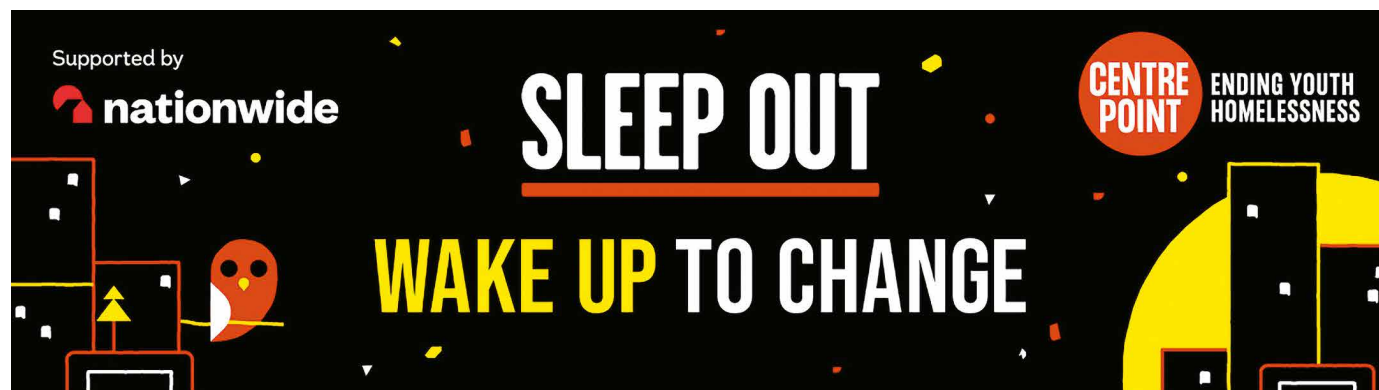
Cassie was referred to Centrepunkt at 17 after a bereavement triggered a family breakdown and she became homeless. Four years later, Cassie has completed her degree in Fine Art and a PGCE and has just qualified as an art teacher.

Cassie recently won the Educational Excellence Award at the Centrepunkt Awards 2024. Accepting her award from Centrepunkt's Patron, Prince William, she said, "I am so grateful to Centrepunkt, without their support, I wouldn't be the confident person standing before you today."



Read more about the Awards and all the winners by scanning the QR code





ENDING YOUTH HOMELESSNESS, ONE NIGHT AT A TIME

For 20 years, we've been braving the cold—whether sleeping in football stadiums or school playgrounds – to raise funds and awareness for youth homelessness. Each year, we take a stand to change attitudes and help end homelessness for young people, one night at a time.

In recent months, we've hosted some incredible Sleep Out events with our supporters. From teaming up with the Manchester United Foundation for a memorable Sleep Out at Old Trafford, holding another with our corporate partners at The Oval Cricket Ground in London, to even having a committed supporter organise a Sleep Out on Bournemouth Beach. Each Sleep Out featured activities, talks, and opportunities for participants to learn more about the challenges facing young people today—before bedding down for a night in the cold.

Our partnership with Nationwide: Moving Closer to Ending Youth Homelessness

Last year we welcomed Nationwide Building Society as our Headline Sponsor for Sleep Out! Over three years, our partnership will help over 3,500 young people take steps towards independence and a home of their own.

“In 2024 we launched Nationwide Fairer Futures, with the aim of helping those who have been dealt an unfair hand and tackling some of the biggest issues we see in society today. We're really proud to be joining forces with our colleagues, customers and communities and Sleeping Out to get a glimpse into some of the challenges homeless young people face, and to raise the vital funds and awareness needed to end youth homelessness.”

Kerry O'Malley, Head of Social Impact at Nationwide

Will you join our movement for change?

Whether it's hosting your own Sleep Out or taking part in one of Centrepoint's events, join our movement for change today.

By taking part, you'll be helping to provide a safe place and support to young people experiencing homelessness. Together, we can make a lasting impact, so no young person has to face homelessness alone.

To find out more visit
www.centrepont.org/sleepout
or get in touch by email
sleepout@centrepont.org



Participants taking part in our November Sleep Out challenge.



SPRINGING INTO ACTION FOR CENTREPOINT

Thank you so much for your continued support for Centrepoint! To find out how you can sign up to an exciting challenge in 2025, check out our events calendar:
www.centrepont.org.uk/challenge-events or get in touch with events@centrepont.org

CHALLENGE EVENTS CALENDAR



LONDON TO BRIGHTON BIKE RIDE

15th June 2025
Registration fee: £28
Target: £350



GREAT NORTH RUN

7th September 2025
Registration fee: £30
Target: £350



ROYAL PARKS HALF MARATHON

12th October 2025
Registration fee: £30
Target: £350

NO YOUNG PERSON SHOULD BE **LEFT WITHOUT** **SUPPORT** WHEN FACING HOMELESSNESS.

Join our campaign to ensure we
see No Young Person Left Out.

Over 118,000 young people faced homelessness last year. Thousands went to their local council seeking support, however one-third of young people facing homelessness in England did not receive an assessment - let alone the support they may have needed.

Local councils are facing huge financial strain, lacking the millions they need to respond to the growing homelessness crisis, leaving them with little resources and capacity. Without more funding and support, the situation is likely to deteriorate further.

Young people facing homelessness are being forgotten, turned away, or ignored. However, we aren't willing to see more young people left out.

We are urgently asking the Government to increase funding for local authorities so that no young person is left without the support they need from their local council.

Campaign with us
and find out more.

Scan the QR below
or visit [www.centrepoin.org.uk/
noyoungpersonleftout](http://www.centrepoin.org.uk/noyoungpersonleftout)



This newsletter costs just 21p to print and enables us to tell you about how you are making a difference to homeless young people. Please pass on to friends and family so even more people can find out about our work. If you have any questions about Centrepoin, specific feedback on this communication or if you wish to receive this newsletter via email only, please call on 0800 23 23 20, email supportercare@centrepoin.org or write to us at the address below. We sometimes use models and change the names of young people to protect their identity; however, all stories are true and as told by the young person.

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**CENTRE
POINT**

**ENDING YOUTH
HOMELESSNESS**