

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

While Centrepoint is probably best known for supporting young people out of homelessness, ensuring that they have the skills and confidence to access and maintain a home and a job, we also work to change policy so that fewer young people have to turn to us for help in the first place. As Centrepoint's Policy and Research Manager, I lead a team dedicated to undertaking high quality research and advocating for policy change that will end youth homelessness, for good.

The recent General Election has increased the need for well evidenced, high quality youth homelessness policy and research. Since the 2019 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. The new government must rise to the challenge of implementing policies that will reverse this trend – ensuring that, by the end of the next parliament, we are no longer in a position where we expect another significant rise in the youth homelessness rate.

My team is working to influence policy makers at all levels to ensure that youth homelessness is a priority for the new government and that they implement policies aimed at supporting young people. However, we cannot do this alone.

Centrepoint needs your support to make the case to the new government that they must address youth homelessness and ensure that every young person has the opportunity to lead a meaningful life.

I hope that you enjoy reading this issue of *Your Impact*, and that you continue to feel inspired to work with us and support the incredible work being done across Centrepoint.



Best regards,

Theritye

Dr Tom Kerridge
Policy and Research Manager

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.

Cover image: Centrepoint young person, Andrew, pictured at Reuben House. Read more about his story on page 9.

CONTENTS

03 Addi's story: understanding myself

04 Centrepoint's manifesto for the new government

05 How we've influenced policy: Renters Reform Bill

06 Centrepoint partners with Nationwide

07 Aysar's story: finding acceptance

08 Reuben House: one year on

09 Andrew's journey to independence

10 Meet Gill

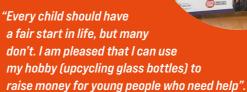
12 Hopeful not hopeless

13 Creating safe spaces for young people

14 Get involved today

Supporter Spotlight

Our supporters are helping thousands of vulnerable young people move on from homelessness and put it behind them for good. One of these supporters is Jutta Boehmer. Jutta said,



Thank you to Jutta and all our supporters for everything that you're helping us to achieve with young people. If you're interested in sharing your story about why you support Centrepoint please get in touch with our Supporter Care Team supportercare@centrepoint.org



February Appeal Update

Our February Appeal earlier this year focussed on our Helpline and the incredible support this offers to young people like Layla. Thanks to generous supporters, we raised over an amazing $\mathfrak{L}184,000$ to further help homeless young people and it is already making such a difference.



ADDI'S STORY:

UNDERSTANDING MYSELF

Addi, who is neurodivergent, became homeless following a family breakdown. Since living in a Centrepoint service, he has been supported in a variety of ways and he is now feeling much stronger.

Addi's mental health deteriorated after some difficult, personal issues. His relationship with his mum reached breaking point, so he was kicked out. After a tough period sofa surfing with friends, Addi's local council thankfully referred him to a Centrepoint service.

Since then, Addi has been supported in numerous ways. He's had over eight months support from our in-house Psychotherapy Team, as well as cooking support with our in-house hospitality trainer to help him understand nutrition and how to cook proper meals. He also worked towards his Construction Skills Certificate Scheme (CSCS) card with the support of our employability trainer so he can apply for jobs in construction.

Addi's Centrepoint key worker has been with him every step of the way and he says their support has been instrumental to his progress. He explains:

"They've been there to help me with everything. Just having conversations with them every day makes a big difference.

Sometimes my mental health makes me feel like I can't live but

when someone tells me that I'm doing so well, it does give me that momentary respite."

Addi also has been diagnosed with ADHD, autism and borderline personality disorder, which caused him a lot of problems at school. He says:

"Before my diagnosis, people used to label me as a bad kid. I was bullied."

Addi's personal transformation has been immense. His relationship with his mum has also improved and he has just passed his CSCS test. He is about to start bidding for his own property with the support of his key worker, and hopefully will find employment soon.

His advice to others going through challenging times is:

"Keep pushing, keep humble. Things are quite hard at the start, but keep going through the darkness before you see the light." Your support
gives young people
like Addi the
chance of a new life.
Thank you.

CENTREPOINT'S MANIFESTO FOR THE NEW GOVERNMENT

Youth homelessness is a growing and costly problem in the UK. Last year, almost 136,000 young people approached their council seeking support because they were homeless or at risk of homelessness – the sixth year in a row that we have measured an increase. Moreover, youth homelessness costs UK society an estimated £8.5 billion every year due to government expenditure on services and economic loss linked to unemployment.

Despite these alarming figures, the former government did not implement policies that aimed at tackling the many issues that cause youth homelessness. Across the UK, we have seen how massive increases in private rents and a lack of social housing have pushed young people into homelessness. We have also

observed how years of underfunding have meant that young people often struggle to access local authority homelessness support, and that homeless young people face significant challenges accessing meaningful employment.

The recent General Election represented a chance for the new government to end youth homelessness. If they do not act, we are not only going to keep losing billions of pounds every year, but we will waste the huge potential of the tens of thousands of young people who experience homelessness every year.

Centrepoint's Manifesto proposes a series of evidence-based policies that we believe should act as the basis for any plan to end youth homelessness. The manifesto comprises of three main asks that will enable young people who have experienced homelessness to receive support, access genuinely affordable housing and enter the workplace.



If you would like to learn more about our manifesto, visit centrepoint.org.uk/manifesto or scan the QR code.





HOW WE'VE INFLUENCED POLICY: RENTERS REFORM BILL

Centrepoint's Independent Living Programme provides genuinely affordable, fixed-term accommodation to young people in work or an apprenticeship who would otherwise struggle to access private and social rented housing. Rents in Independent Living are capped at one third of a resident's salary, meaning that they can build savings, move away from using benefits, pay their rent through earned income and eventually move on into the private rented sector.

In late 2022, Centrepoint became aware of a threat to the Independent Living Programme in the Renters (Reform) Bill that would mean that tenancies could only be ended if a legal ground exists, e.g. anti-social behaviour. This change would have meant that providers of Stepping Stone Accommodation – which bridges the gap for young people moving on from supported accommodation to living independently – could no longer offer fixed term tenancies, reducing the flow through of new tenants benefiting from programmes such as Independent Living.

While Centrepoint supports the Renters (Reform) Bill, we were immediately concerned that the Bill would have an unintended, negative consequence on Independent Living. Therefore, in early 2023, Centrepoint began on a 15 month long process of influencing government to amend the Bill and protect the model, meeting with and seeking to influence key stakeholders at the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and the Department for Work and Pensions.

On the 24th of April 2024, the Government announced that they would be amending the Bill to protect Stepping Stone Accommodation, such as our Independent Living Programme – introducing a new ground enabling providers to continue offering fixed-term tenancies. In announcing this new ground, the former minister, Jacob Young MP, highlighted Centrepoint's role in convincing the Government of the need to make the change.

This is a significant win for Centrepoint, showing that the Government understands the value of and wants to protect Independent Living – so that future young people can enjoy the benefits of our innovative housing model.

Despite our progress, however, the recent General Election meant that the Renters Reform Bill did not fully pass into law. We will, therefore, work to ensure that Independent Living is protected in any future iteration of the Bill.



CENTREPOINT PARTNERS WITH NATIONWIDE

We're delighted to announce Centrepoint's largest ever corporate partnership with Nationwide – Britain's largest building society! We're part of their new Fairer Futures programme – designed to tackle three of the biggest issues seen in society: homelessness, families living in poverty and people living with dementia.

Through this partnership, even more young people who've experienced homelessness will be supported to take steps towards independence and having a home of their own – somewhere they can feel safe, where they belong, and where they can rebuild their lives.

Nationwide will be helping us to:

- Make our supported accommodation services the best possible environments for young people escaping homelessness.
- Create more Stepping Stone Accommodation to help bridge the gap between supported accommodation and living independently.
- Help young people move on from supported accommodation into the private rental sector.
- Shine a light on the policy changes needed to end youth homelessness by 2037.

Seyi Obakin, Chief Executive Officer at Centrepoint, said:

"Last year, almost 136,000 young people faced homelessness – a record high number that sadly is only increasing. This is not acceptable and that is why we want to end youth homelessness now and for the next generation of young people.

"This is an ambitious aim and not something we can achieve alone. That is why we are so pleased to be partnering with Nationwide over the next three years. I am particularly excited by the opportunity to support almost 3,000 young people to escape



homelessness and enable them to have a home where they feel safe, where they belong and where they can rebuild their lives."

Debbie Crosbie, Chief Executive Officer of Nationwide said: "Nationwide is committed to improving lives and strengthening communities. Our new Fairer Futures social impact programme will support even more people who have been dealt an unfair hand."

In June, Centrepoint staff and former residents, pictured, visited Nationwide's Head Office to tell staff about the fantastic impact the partnership will have for homeless young people.



AYSAR'S STORY:

FINDING ACCEPTANCE

Your support is giving vulnerable young people, like Aysar, the chance to overcome trauma and begin a new, more hopeful future. Thank you so much.

Growing up, 20-year-old Aysar was subject to abuse both at school and within the family, and after he built up the courage to tell his family when he was 16, they didn't believe him and suggested he should end his own life if he was going to say such things about the family.

Soon afterwards, lockdown happened and he had no choice but to live through it in the family home which he remembers being one of the most difficult periods of his life. In 2023, his family then discovered that he was having a sexual relationship with another man and they presented him with an ultimatum: either live at home or continue with the relationship.

Aysar decided that he had no choice but to leave. He was given emergency accommodation and then he had his own place, but he was made to leave as his housing benefit didn't cover his rent. Thankfully he was referred to Centrepoint by his local authority.

Since being at Centrepoint, Aysar says he has finally had the headspace to put himself back together and start to learn the skills necessary to stand on his own two feet. He has also been able to access support from one of Centrepoint's dedicated psychotherapists, Amrita, to work through some of his trauma. He says this has been invaluable and has helped him to trust again.

Amrita has been so impressed with his progress, she said: "Aysar has started to find his voice and has grown so much. It's been a privilege to witness him on this journey."



Aysar has also been able to access support from one of

Centrepoint's Jobs, Education and Training (JET) advisors. With their support, he is now on a pre-apprenticeship with Yorkshire Housing and eventually wants to go on to do an electrical apprenticeship. Aysar says that since being at Centrepoint, he feels both supported and heard and that he has developed a range of skills: in particular assertiveness and confidence.

His whole outlook and self-view have shifted and he is now hoping to move into his own place soon. He explains:

"Linzi, one of the staff at Centrepoint said to me, 'Life shrinks or expands according to your courage.' It's really stuck with me and I'm trying to live by that."



Our room sponsors help make stories like Aysar's possible. You can sponsor a room today for just $\mathfrak{L}12$ a month and help more young people overcome trauma and leave homelessness behind, for good. Please visit centrepoint.org.uk/sponsoraroom or scan the QR code to become a room sponsor today.

REUBEN HOUSE: ONE YEAR ON

This June marked the one-year anniversary of Independent Living's flagship development, Reuben House, which was officially opened by HRH Prince William, The Prince of Wales.

Reuben House uses modular housing to create homes that are perfectly designed for formerly homeless young people. Centrepoint has transformed the site in Southwark from eight units over two storeys, to become a site offering 33 modular studio homes, split over two blocks at three storeys each. These 'right size' homes each have a shower room, bedroom, kitchen and lounge diner, and give young people the security and independence of their own front door.

Reuben House, and our other Independent Living homes, bridge the gap between supported housing and the private rented sector. They provide young people with genuinely affordable housing where rent is capped at around one third of their income. The homes are good quality and fully furnished so young people can move in with everything they need from day one.

Independent Living homes remove the barriers that prevent young people finding work and moving on from local authority supported housing, giving them the best chance of maintaining a job, a home and progressing to a long term successful and stable position, leaving homelessness behind.

All of the young people at Reuben House are either in employment or an apprenticeship, and several young people have moved into new jobs with higher salaries and better prospects whilst at Reuben House.

Young people at Reuben House have developed a real sense of community, both within the development and also in the wider neighbourhood. This is helping them to learn key life skills, such as communication, leadership, empathy and resilience, and also important social connections, especially with neighbours.

Feedback from young people accessing Reuben House in particular has shown once they feel safe and settled, they are much keener to explore future housing options outside traditional social housing properties. This demonstrates a huge shift in their thinking and aspiration compared to the young people who come through other Centrepoint services. They are also showing increased confidence and knowledge of their tenancy rights which will be critical when they move on from Reuben House.

We are pleased to share that since opening Reuben House a year ago, seven young people moved into their own homes. This includes two young people who are now the proud owners of shared ownership properties in Kent, with two others able to secure a property via the social housing route.

The focus on Independent Living properties being a safe, reliable stepping stone into long term accommodation seems to have spurred many to follow up routes into buying property, using their time at Reuben House to save deposits, build confidence in their working roles and then moving on when they feel ready and able to put down roots in their chosen areas.

Centrepoint's aim is to create 300 Independent Living homes by 2027, with 50 homes created to date. Building Reuben House has enabled Centrepoint to change the conversation from 'this is how we could do it' to 'this is how we have done it' and we have been astonished by the amount of interest that it has generated. Having an example of what works has enabled us to engage and influence key decision makers and has accelerated conversations with other Local Authorities – who have seen it operating, are inspired by our model, and want to replicate it in their own communities.





ANDREW'S JOURNEY TO INDEPENDENCE

Andrew, pictured above, is just one young person who was referred to Centrepoint's Independent Living Programme.

18 months ago, Andrew was living with another supported housing provider, but when he started working as an electrical apprentice, he struggled to pay his rent as his housing benefit was cut. He reflects:

"I never wanted to be in the benefits system. It's there for people that really need it and I was working. But they squeezed me so much that it made me just forget what I was doing and stay on benefits because it put me in a better financial position."

Luckily, Andrew was referred to our Independent Living Programme providing truly affordable housing for working young people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. For Andrew, it was life changing. He says,

"It was a stepping stone to the next stage of independence. I was able to save money for the first time and plan my future. I had more freedom and I could enjoy my life a bit more, I even went on holiday this year."

Andrew has recently moved into his own council property and is coming to the end of his apprenticeship. He hopes to become self-employed. He said: "I feel safe, secure and grateful. I don't know what the future holds, but I feel like it's looking bright."



Watch a video of Andrew telling his story by scanning this QR code.

MEET GILL

Imagine a future where every young person has a safe and secure place to call home. This future is getting closer thanks to supporters like Gill, who chose to remember Centrepoint in her Will. We recently spoke with Gill to learn more about her inspiring decision.

"I'm doing it in memory of my husband and I hope that it helps to make a difference to a charity that he cared about."

Gill's decision to include Centrepoint in her Will was not just a financial choice, but a deeply emotional one. It was a way for her to honour the memory of her late husband, Patrick, who was also a Centrepoint supporter.

"An advert on the train really struck a chord with him and it made a huge impression. He had quite a disruptive childhood himself, and I sometimes wonder whether he looked at that and thought that could have been me. That was how his support for Centrepoint started."

Patrick's unexpected passing led Gill to re-evaluate her priorities, with her daughter's future becoming a driving force. Gill's decision to rewrite her Will was not only to provide for her daughter, but to ensure Patrick's legacy continues to make a lasting impact.

"I had to think about my daughter, so for me it wasn't difficult rewriting it. I did it through a company, as it was so important that I got it right. I have become more aware of how important it is to have things in order and ensure they reflect your current wishes."

Gill's commitment to ending youth homelessness extends beyond the gift in her Will. With skills gained throughout her career, Gill now uses her experience to provide valuable support for young people with challenging backgrounds – encouraging them to explore volunteering opportunities and be open to new learning experiences.



HOPEFUL NOT HOPELESS

A spoken word poem, co-written by seven young people with lived experience of homelessness.

Young and naïve, I Believed it to be a one-off occurrence, not a trend Another mattress, another sofa, another friend

Young and naïve, I Thought the world was a Disney movie, a fairy tale of sorts My naivety kept me protected in a blanket fort

Young and naive, I Found autism's prism cast a spectrum A puzzle piece hidden in the darkest of nights

Young and naïve, I Was a traumatized child facing the streets Now I'm a woman trying to make ends meet

I'm sick and tired of Being sick and tired Of not being hired

I'm sick and tired of Being perceived as a liar Of the ladder getting higher

I'm sick and tired of The bubble I'm contained in Of mental constraining

I'm sick and tired of Labels tearing at the fibres of my being. The qualities I have that people aren't seeing.

I'm sick and tired of Having to prove I'm damaged and destitute The stories I'm telling being in dispute



I'm sick and tired of lf's, But's and Maybe's The Us vs Them mentality

I'm sick and tired of Smiling, overcorrecting myself and being formal Anti-depressants and sleep meds just to feel normal

I'm sick and tired of The agency saying they're going to save me Eating pot noodles while they enjoy meat and gravy.

I visualize a future where Change happens and biases are left to the side We leave the social and economic downfall and cast away our pride

I visualize a future where Waves of compassion and armies of love Take care of people like social doves

I visualize a future where I stand on major stages My story is on published pages

I visualize a future where I'm aiming High, not aimless I'm hopeful, not hopeless

CREATING SAFE SPACES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

At Centrepoint we're constantly working to renovate our services to ensure they are suitable for young people and psychologically informed. This means we always take into account a young person's psychological and emotional needs within their physical environment.

Our Planned Maintenance programme, which leads on the renovation of our services, launched in 2022, with the first refurbishment project in Camden. This was completed in under 3 months and was the flagship project to showcase the new liveable standard we're aiming for across both our services and our partners'.

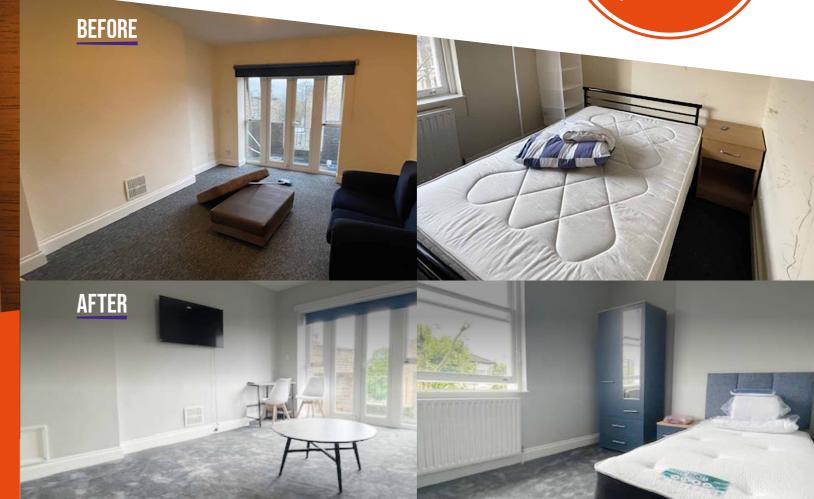
Since then, we've completed 3 more sites across Camden, Ealing and Hammersmith, and we're currently working on our 17-bed service in Soho. You can check out the transformation of the Hammersmith service below!



we'll be renovating 5 more services, before moving onto further properties in 2026/27. Dr Helen Miles, Head of Psychologically Informed Environments, said:

"Arriving at a building that is welcoming and well looked after gives you the impression that you are of value and are equally worth the time and investment increasing your motivation for change."

Your generosity ensures that our vital redevelopment plans can continue, thank you so much.



Watch the video to hear the young people share their realities and tell us the future they hope to see. Scan the QR code.

GET INVOLVED TODAY

BE CREATIVE WITH OUR FLEXIBLE 10:10 FUNDRAISING CHALLENGE!

Following last year's success, we are asking you to do a different "10" themed activity for 10 consecutive days in October, to honour World Homeless Day on 10 October.

In 2023, our participants raised over £20,000 doing everything from "going vegan for 10 days" to "10 handstands" to "learning 10 sentences in Portuguese." The possibilities are endless and there is an activity for everyone to suit your interests and commitments.

"10:10 last year was amazing", says Stacey, whose 9-year-old daughter Millie did 10 good deeds. "We loved being part of the

Visit
centrepoint.org.uk/1010
for more information on
how to take part

WhatsApp group and
Millie was delighted to
fundraise in this accessible
way for your incredible charity."

With a minimum fundraising target of £200, this could fund 10 psychotherapy counselling sessions for a homeless young person; ensuring those experiencing a mental health crisis receive the vital support they need.

By joining the 10:10 community, we can help end youth homelessness together.

JOIN OUR TEAM IN 2025 FOR THE LONDON LANDMARKS HALF MARATHON





Date: 6th April 2025
Registration fee: £28

Fundrasing target: £350

Visit centrepoint.org.uk/londonlandmarks



Not to worry if you're not based in London, we have a whole range of events for you to choose from.

To find out more please visit our website centrepoint.org.uk/get-involved or get in touch with events@centrepoint.org

HOLD YOUR OWN SLEEP OUT

Every day our amazing supporters fundraise to help young people move to a brighter future. Earlier in the year we spoke to Simon, who slept in his garden in February and raised £500 in sponsorship. See what he had to say about his Sleep Out here:

Tell us a little bit about your experience holding your own Sleep Out

I chose to sleep out without a tent, just a sleeping bag, blanket, on top of some pieces of cardboard. I was under a porch but outside... It was a chilly night, not freezing but cold enough!

Why did you want to hold your own Sleep Out?

We are a developed nation, but with a deep divide between rich and poor, and anyone of us are just a set of circumstances away from being homeless. We need to do all we can to help vulnerable young people to be able to move off the streets, and to gain opportunities to live life safely and to reach their full potential.

One night for me was a simple gesture, with no long-term hardship. Raising funds, however small, seemed like the right thing to do.

What did you find difficult?

I felt vulnerable, even though my location was safe. I was surprised about this, and it made me appreciate how scary it must be for young people in this situation. I did not have to risk intimidation from others or worse, but it is a lonely place to be.

I was also very cold and uncomfortable. I must have woken up every 30 mins or so, it was a very broken night. I woke up finally at around 4.00am feeling extremely cold and it took me four or five days to really feel warm again. I cannot imagine feeling like this day in and day out.

Did you learn anything by holding your own Sleep Out?

Yes, how tough it is, how lonely it must be, and how dehumanising it can be. And cold!



If you, like Simon, are keen to hold your own Sleep Out to support young people throughout the UK then you can find out more or sign up here: www.centrepoint.org.uk/sleepout or email sleepout@centrepoint.org

DO YOU NEED TO WRITE OR UPDATE YOUR WILL?

USE OUR FREE WILL OFFER TO WRITE YOUR WILL TODAY

We want to make writing or updating your Will as affordable and convenient for you as possible, so we've partnered with Bequeathed. Their simple, step-by-step online process can help you get legal advice and create a good basic Will for free.

Bequeathed will help you consider everything you need when making your Will, and flag any areas where legal advice would be beneficial. You can then book a free video appointment with their legal team to discuss these further. Or, if a basic Will is suitable for you, this can be sent directly to your inbox.

Get started today by visiting bequeathed.org/Centrepoint or scanning the QR code





SCAN TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT OUR FREE WILL WRITING OFFER!



Request a Free Will Guide for more detailed information. Call us on 020 7423 6290 – our team will be happy to help.

Email legacies@centrepoint.org with any queries about leaving a gift in your Will

This newsletter costs just 16p 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 Centrepoint, 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@centrepoint.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.

Centrepoint, Central House, 25 Camperdown Street, London E18DZ. Tel. 0800 23 23 20 centrepoint.org.uk





