

A flexible and tailored service, Home Works provides housing support to prevent homelessness. We support single people, couples and families across East Sussex, aged 16-64, homeless or at risk of losing their home and need support to live independently.

In this issue of our stakeholder newsletter we've focussed on the support we provide for vulnerable families and their children. For more information contact us at 01273 898 700.



Supporting vulnerable families

Between July and December 2016 (five months), Home Works provided support for 2,086 clients. Of these:



779 were households with children



55 were teenagers (aged 16-18)



4.6% were care leavers



182 referrals were received from Children's Services



79% of households had at least one person with a mental health problem



62% of households had at least one person with a long term health condition

Working with families and the NHS to support proactive care



In recent months we have refreshed our performance measures and trained our staff to support the work of the proactive care agenda, a strategic priority of both East Sussex Better Together (ESBT) and the Connecting 4 You programme.

Our staff deliver key health interventions to families through a 'Make Every Contact Count' approach. These include self-care, self-management and the 'five ways to wellbeing' which interweave into key housing support outcomes with the aim of reducing hospital admissions and visits to Accident and Emergency.

We work with our clients to support them to understand and make use of Telehealth and Telecare services which can assist with independent living and self-management of long term health conditions. For example, lifeline and assistive technology.

Taking a whole family self-care approach to health, we support clients to register with a GP, NHS dentist and optometrist who can all help to identify early health concerns.

We link clients into their community pharmacy where they can get expert health care advice and a health MOT. In doing this, we have found that clients visit their GP less.

Clients with long term conditions are supported to better self-manage by attending specialist clinical appointments, taking medications appropriately and undertaking WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan) courses.

Digital technology can help too. We support clients to better manage their own and their family's health through free apps, such as Health Help Now, Sugar Smart and Cold Weather Alert.

Our staff are also helping families to keep warm this winter by providing comprehensive winter warmth guidance and referring eligible clients for home insulation and improvement works as part of the East Sussex Winter Home Check Service.

We recently welcomed the newly in-post EBST Pro-active care practitioners to meet with managers and staff to facilitate better understanding of each other's remits and roles, and look forward to developing this partnership throughout 2017.

Safeguarding families and vulnerable children



Last year we supported 779 families with children, helping them to improve their housing situation as well as other areas of their life, for example, maximising income, returning to work and improving health and emotional wellbeing.

Working with parents to help keep them and their children safe and well is an important part of what we do.

This could include supporting them to:

- keep safe, in and out of their home
- access fire safety checks to prevent risk of fire
- keep their children safe online
- manage and use alcohol responsibly
- manage substance misuse issues and access specialist services when needed
- keep safe if experiencing domestic or other types of abuse
- register and access primary healthcare such as a GP or dentist
- access universal services.

We take time to build relationships with families, in their home, and can help them to identify where they need extra support.

We work closely with families alongside relevant professionals to ensure they can access the right support when they need it. This might include signposting them to early help services such as Children's Centres or the Early Help Keywork Service. If there is a relationship breakdown we can help them access family mediation services.

We contribute to early help plans and where a social care intervention is required we can support families to engage in the process and help them to achieve their goals.

"I wanted to express my appreciation for the guidance and support we have had from the Home Works service since Ricky was threatened with homelessness. Home Works has been a great support and continues to help and encourage him to engage and make progress. There is still a long road ahead for Ricky, especially as his health condition means he has great difficulty with social contact, but his Home Works' worker is successfully getting through." Mother of a client of Home Works.

Tonia's story



"Our FSO always guided and never imposed her thoughts but laid out the options and gave us the space to make choices."

"I'm now managing me, my family and our mental health."

"Giorgia, my youngest of three, started to have full blown cluster partial seizures which started and just kept coming. The hospital had to leave her without medication to see how they developed and I had to sit and watch my baby girl have seizure after seizure. I can never put into words how useless I felt in those days.

To come home to the house we called home with water dripping down electrical cables into light bulbs, after 10 days of hell and heartbreak, I will never be able to wipe from my mind. It was my breaking point.

A lovely lady gave me a phone number of Home Works to ring about sorting the repair and, wow, that was the call that changed everything.

I thought she (Floating Support Officer - FSO) was coming to help repair my home but she came and repaired us. She understood in so many ways.

From the age of 9, I've had hormone imbalances and struggled with mental health episodes. I had a gastric bypass which resulted in me losing nearly 11 stone. The journey that put me through mentally while coping with 3 children. The absolute tiredness.

She gave us tools to take the steps to make everything function again. The help, support and pure kindness we were shown gave us so much strength. We discussed what had to change. First was the house as we needed a home, a safe home. Our FSO always guided and never imposed her thoughts but laid out the options and gave us the space to make choices.

She taught me how to be human again. She looked at us as people, as individuals, a family, a unit. She helped me understand my strengths. I'm now managing me, my family and our mental health."

Contact us: To refer someone to Home Works visit our website www.southdownhousing.org to download a referral form and email it to referrals@home-works.org.uk. For more information send us an email or call 01273 898 700, text 07773 377 754 or fax 01273 898 701. You can also send us a message on our Facebook page HomeWorks.SHA