

Young Health Programme in the UK

In the UK, we have worked with Depaul UK, the largest national youth homelessness charity, to improve the health of young homeless people.

Around 80,000 young people experience homelessness each year. Typically, they come from disadvantaged backgrounds and have suffered trauma and disruption in their childhood. This is compounded by the experience of being homeless, which has life-inhibiting economic, social and health impacts. The consequences of being homeless, such as poverty, isolation and leading a chaotic lifestyle, are also risk factors for mental health problems.

After the agreed three years, the Programme in the UK has come to an end but the focus placed on long-term health awareness and education amongst homeless youth, has ensured the sustainability of the Programme.



AstraZeneca 

Young Health Programme

A global community investment initiative

in partnership with



Young Health Programme in the UK



What did we want to achieve through the Programme?

- Understand the health needs and barriers to health faced by young homeless people
- Foster better mental health through creating a sense of purpose and increasing self esteem
- Further build health professionals' understanding of the different health needs and requirements of young homeless people
- Address the complex health needs of young homeless people through practical advice and solutions

What has been achieved?

Health Research & Development:

To start the Programme, Depaul UK and AstraZeneca undertook comprehensive research to understand the health needs and barriers to health faced by young homeless people. The research findings have shaped the health interventions that were implemented by the two organisations.

- **Psychologically Informed Environments (PIE):** A therapeutic approach and training system which enables Depaul UK staff to better support the mental health needs of their clients. After an initial trial, the proposal is to extend the project to other Depaul UK services in London, the North West and North East of England.
- **Meaningful Activities:** A standardised 'meaningful activities toolkit' has been developed enabling three regional Depaul UK co-ordinators to implement activities, including peer-led activities, tailored to individual client interests. The overall aim is to foster better mental health through creating a sense of purpose and increasing self esteem.
- **Educating and Influencing for Better Health Outcomes:** This project further developed health professionals' understanding of the different health needs and requirements of young homeless people.

Creating an environment for change in policy and services:

- Health research and recommendations were launched in a report entitled "Making it Matter", in Parliament.
- A health and public sector expert group turned health recommendations into practical guidance, 'Making it Matter: Putting it into Practice'. This was then sent to over 400 key stakeholders across the UK.

Health Interventions - development and implementation:

- Over 120 Depaul UK staff have received specialised mental health training through a roll out of Psychologically Informed Environments.
- The Meaningful Activities programme underpins good mental health for young people.

Recognition:

The Programme was shortlisted for two UK pharmaceutical industry awards.

Local partner

Depaul UK is the largest national youth homelessness charity. Since it was founded in 1989, it has helped over 50,000 people and continues to work with over 3,500 young people a year, as well as over 2,000 more young people through their Nightstop (safe emergency accommodation) schemes. Depaul UK believes that no young person should have to sleep rough, and whilst they work to provide the accommodation that offers an immediate solution to homelessness, a vital part of their work is to prevent young people becoming homeless in the first place.