

Overview and Scrutiny

6th January 2025

The Basement Project Aims of Grant Funding

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Shirley Webb
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Judith Willis Assistant Director Community and Housing Services
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Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	Not Applicable
Relevant Strategic Priorities(s)	Housing
Non Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to RESOLVE to note the contents of this report.

2. **BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 This report seeks to provide Overview and Scrutiny Members an opportunity to familiarise themselves with the aims and outcomes of the Basement Project which is based in Bromsgrove and provides housing related support and other support to young people up to the age of 25.
- 2.2 The Council supports the Basement Project with both Homelessness Prevention Grant and Domestic Abuse grant funding.
- 2.3 The purpose of the ringfenced Homelessness Prevention Grant fund is to give local authorities control and flexibility in managing homelessness pressures and supporting those who are at risk of homelessness. The Government expects local authorities to use it to deliver the following priorities:
- To fully enforce the Homelessness Reduction Act and contribute to ending rough sleeping by increasing activity to prevent single homelessness.
 - Reduce family temporary accommodation numbers through maximising family homelessness prevention.

Overview and Scrutiny

6th January 2025

- Eliminate the use of unsuitable bed and breakfast accommodation for families for longer than the statutory six week limit.
- 2.4 Domestic Abuse New Burdens Grant funding is allocated to ensure that councils can comply with the requirements to provide safe and supported accommodation for those fleeing domestic abuse.
- 2.5 The Grant Funding is monitored and Appendix 1 details an outcomes monitoring table.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Homelessness Grant and Domestic Abuse New Burdens Grant monies are allocated to the Basement Project as follows:

Homelessness Grant Allocation	2025/26
North Worcestershire Basement Project - Support for young people at risk of homelessness	24,541

Domestic Abuse Grant Allocation	2025/26
Basement Project	15,459

Financing of the Basement Project

- 3.2 The Basement Project 2023-2028 strategy has set out to diversify income over the next five years. During 2023 the Basement Project were successful in securing Reaching Communities funding for 2023 to 2028, Lloyds Foundation funding 2023 to 2026 and a volume of local funding / free of charge services from individuals and local business in the Bromsgrove District (NFU Mutual, WigWam Storage, Vinci Construction, Hintons). They have indicated interest in other commissioned work and remain strong in local fundraising which generates c£50,000 per annum. They formally agreed a new five-year lease with a rental well below market rates in April 2023. This will save £70,000 over five years. They are working hard with local businesses to develop support (HSBC, NFU Mutual, Santander) and have a number of funding bids in place in line with their funding cycle.
- 3.3 The Basement Project have recognised that securing funding would not have been possible or significantly more challenging without BDC's previous and ongoing support, as by being able to demonstrate that they had ongoing local statutory support gives other funders more

Overview and Scrutiny

6th January 2025

confidence in funding them. This is important as one set of funding alone is not sufficient for the Basement Project to deliver its charitable object.

3.4 The Basement Project has also received Household Support Fund money via Bromsgrove Council and since the Phase 1 of the Fund started in 2021. The total of this Grant to date has been £37,000 which has been used to support the delivery of a food bank.

3.5 Their expenditure budget for 2024/25 (detailed below) is £394,000 which reflects a very efficient operating model noting the expected pressures of cost inflation.

Budget 2024/25	
Staff costs (including Employers' NI and pensions) comprising Youth Support Workers (x7) Operations Manager (Team Leader) Senior Support & Finance Manager Community Fundraising Manager (21 hours per week) Chief Executive Officer	£306,740
Direct project costs	
Training, Travel & Security (lone working, CCTV etc)	£9,300
Client Support	£9,000
Marketing, Events & Workshops	£12,235
Food Bank	£8,000
IT, Telephony & Broadband	£10,600
Print, Stationary & Postage	£4,748
Drop-in / Office Overheads (rent, water rates, utilities, insurance, repairs & maintenance, refuse, cleaning)	£24,222
Drop-in & Floating Support - Governance, Insurances, Professional Fees, Accounting & Audit, Depreciation, Subscriptions, fundraising	£17667
TOTAL COSTS	£402,512

All the funding goes directly towards service delivery and service delivery quality.

Overview and Scrutiny

6th January 2025

- 3.6 The Basement Project helps local young people and families in crisis, particularly around homelessness, risk of homelessness and in creating a foundation for independence;
- to improve the medium to long term safety and housing status of young people leaving home.
 - to enable those who have a tenancy to maintain it;
 - to improve the chances of young people to compete more effectively in the labour market through initiatives such as their Application Station;
 - to access education, employment and skills development; to enable young people to understand their rights and responsibilities;
 - to improve access and “signposting” to support and other services for young people;
 - and to live independently, confidently and empower young people to make positive life choices.
- 3.7 Increasingly, and as part of preventing homelessness, they are supporting young people in physical health, and the challenges of mental wellbeing. Responding to the impact of the cost-of-living crisis which is expected to continue to feature heavily in 2025/2026 includes;
- The successful development and full utilisation the Drop-in on Hanover Street, Bromsgrove including extended community use (NHS Early Assessment, St Johns Counselling Service (Domestic Abuse, self-esteem/confidence, anxiety et al workshops) Social Services, Education & Employability.
 - Maximising delivery hours in communities through Support Workers.
 - Supporting existing and reaching more young people through the targeted Food Bank.
 - Delivering district events, roadshows, freshers’ advice (HOW College) and working in local schools; and rolling out highly successful pilots such as Picnic in the Park, as well as some other tried and tested events (Weston Trip etc).
- 3.8 The Basement Project has a history of delivering positive outcomes. Their strategic plan [2023-2028] aim remains to improve the quality of life for young people and families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. In addition, they aim to prevent homelessness through accelerating their preventative initiatives.
- 3.9 They prevent homelessness / repeat homelessness or help to support young people (and their children) who experience actual homelessness to access and sustain accommodation by supporting them to navigate the housing system, find accommodation solutions and help them understand their tenancy commitments. They support any mental health issues and have seen a significant increase in demand for support in this area, addressing complex needs, and developing

Overview and Scrutiny

6th January 2025

independent living skills that will positively impact on young people's ability to sustain a tenancy.

- 3.10 Young people and families in Bromsgrove and District are supported through the Basement Project Drop-in Service (Hanover Street), Floating Support (working in the BDC district communities) and their targeted Food Bank. Supported by independently exploring each individuals' options and providing; information; practical support; tenancy training (from budgeting to basic home skills); help with furnishing, cookery; shopping on a budget and advocacy. Supporting clients in person with housing option interviews, key meetings and health appointments.
- 3.11 The Basement Project offer support through their family mediation service and conflict resolution to encourage young people to maintain positive relationships in order to stay within the family unit / home; as well as counselling including access to alternative therapy such as hypnotherapy and relaxation techniques, and support in the journey to employment, training and further education.
- 3.12 They want to continue to broaden their reach and impact through independent, efficient and outcome focussed charity model, and through developing the management and governance of the Basement Project continue to contribute towards local good quality services, working cooperatively with appropriate partners (e.g. working with Social Care, BDHT, BARN, Parenting and Family Support Services, The Youth Hub) to build on the community involvement that has grown over many years and during the pandemic whilst working with partners such as Cranstoun, Redditch and Wyre Forest Nightstop and local health professionals to ensure a holistic package of support for young people.
- 3.13 The continued and increasing demand for their services (that are not met by current or planned provision) is indicative of the support need for young people and families under the age of 25. The cost-of-living crisis has exacerbated the need, with expectations of a sustained level of hardship continuing for the next two years. In referrals they are witnessing young people from a broader sector of the local community. The ability to fully engage in person with young people in their communities, aligned to fully utilising the central Bromsgrove Drop-in at Hanover Street for clients (and as a community asset) contributes to their ability to respond in full.

Overview and Scrutiny

6th January 2025

- 3.14 The Basement Project benefit from 25 years of supporting local young people through their stable team, evolved experience and expertise; the community & service relationships the team have to ensure they are collectively making a difference in the local community. They have implemented four key actions to evidence the local need namely:
1. Commissioned the Bright Ideas Partnership [an external and independent charity sector specialist] to complete an evaluation of the Basement Project impact and value.
 2. Increased service user feedback focus and feedback methodology to ensure they captured the service user context and needs.
 3. Analysed the 2022/2023 use of the Drop-in having refurbished and relaunched the Drop-in in 2022.
 4. Committed, attended, and contributed to the strategy and partnership forums / meetings that collectively drive connected solutions.
- 3.15 The provision of support for young people with complex needs, adverse childhood experiences (ACE) and the current cost of living often falls outside the remit or available resource levels of statutory agencies, mental health agencies and the substance misuse services et cetera, leaving organisations such as the Basement with the task of supporting some of the most marginalised people in local communities. Undoubtedly the cost-of-living crisis has brought additional pressures on mental health for many young people and this has been factored this into their support framework as the effect will be felt for several years to come. Financial hardship along with the loss of community frameworks, relationship breakdown and mental health form much of their case load in creating the foundations for independence that will enhance the lives of young people and remove homelessness or the risk of homelessness.
- 3.16 The Basement Project works with young people experiencing domestic abuse (DA) in a sensitive, respectful manner with their focus being on the safety of the individual. They have created a safe physiologically informed environment within the Basement Project where clients experiencing DA feel safe and supported. All support workers have been trained to identify indicators of DA, are confident in approaching conversations with care and empathy, are able to provide information and resources relating to DA and have good partnership relationships with specialist DA agencies. Including WMRSASC, Women's Aid and work closely with BDHT's DA support worker. DA is often not the presenting issue for many clients, many of whom do not recognise they are in a DA relationship. It is only as a result of building a good and trusting relationship with their support worker that they are able to recognise this. A member of our support team has recently qualified as

Overview and Scrutiny

6th January 2025

a Domestic Abuse Champion through the DAWN Project and is able to offer specialist 1:1 support to clients and offer advice to the support team. In 2024 Basement ran a series of workshops focusing on emotional wellbeing/healthy relationships and indicators of DA. These were successful with all attendees reporting that they had benefited. Another series of these will run in 2025. The Basement Project also offer specialist counselling free of charge if needed. From April 2023-April 2024, they worked with 71 clients experiencing DA who were given related support on 591 separate occasions.

- 3.17 They are still seeing a rise in the need for more intensive support. As a staff team they have accessed and continue to access specialist training and continuous personal development (CPD) to enable them to bridge the gap for clients whilst pending / waiting for other services to engage, as well as the whole team receiving additional support themselves to help manage the intensity of support needed by many of their clients.
- 3.18 The real strength underpinning the need, is their ability to work in partnership whilst remaining independent to their clients - (*and the positive association of independence from a client's perspective*); their time served in depth local knowledge, in-house expertise and networks; the ability to provide a timely, holistic and a flexible approach that is focussed on the individual, blending skills and expertise with those of partner agencies is an efficient model. And delivers exceptional value for money.
- 3.19 In the year 2022/2023 88.95% (90% 2022/2022) of the young people they work with acknowledge that they are struggling in some way with their mental health. Up from an original base of 52%. The reality is that many more are trying to cope without acknowledging the impact this has on their daily lives. Getting professional help is extremely challenging and further exacerbated by level of demand for support services and pressure on support budgets. Some will look for other solutions including substance abuse and self-medication or simply stop functioning in a meaningful way. Budgeting on a limited income is difficult but raises further issues when money is "needed" to fund drugs. Research has identified that using a substance is a way to cope with psychological and life difficulties. 70% of people in treatment for drug and substance dependency also have a mental health illness. Suggesting that they stop means taking away their coping strategy, so unless immediate support can be provided it is likely they will return to using to cope with the psychological distress. More critically deploying and evolving preventative strategies will capture young people at an earlier stage in their journey and problem solve before a simple intervention becomes a complex needs case.

Overview and Scrutiny

6th January 2025

- 3.20 In line with current thinking (Homeless Link, Homeless Partnership Meeting(s), Homeless Strategy Steering Group, Young Solutions), the Basement Project is increasingly driving the preventative activities to complement their work with young people. This focus has centred on delivering both preventative and crisis management through their secure Drop-in centre on Hanover Street and in their field based Floating Support.
- 3.21 In creating more capacity and reaching more young people they have developed a detailed operating plan for 2024 and embedded new ways of working. Within this they will look to see a continued increase in volunteering, which will liberate Support Worker time to maximise available hours of support delivery; support more awareness events; enhance support options and increase the direct, face-to-face work as they train, develop and embrace volunteering.
- 3.22 From a prevention perspective, they are very aware that reaching people at an earlier stage is critical and commenced work in 2022/2023 to grow the number of referrals and reach more people at an earlier point through; working directly with schools and colleges, the Department of Work & Pensions (DWP); Social Prescribers, Pathway Workers & Health Visitors; pro-actively securing contact with those in need through the work of their targeted Food Bank (which often captures people who were not previously aware of the Basement Project or are very recently found themselves in a challenging situation); in the investment in their website; social media and communications which has secured BBC radio coverage and numerous press releases in 2023; in their schedule of key events in 2024 which again included awareness linked to Easter, summer holidays (regular picnics in the park); and Halloween, Harvest Festival, and Christmas which they know is a key time for those in need and / or suffering financial hardship.
- 3.23 The Drop-in at Hanover House is well utilised for social, life skills and learning interventions as well as space for other charities and the community to utilise. The Drop-in service location is perfect for access, being next to the town centre, capturing walking, multiple bus route and other support service locations as well as having free car parking to the rear (thanks for Marstons) and external social space. As a result of refurbishment, the Drop-in and open additional rooms / space has encouraged wider community use including the NHS Public Health Nursing Team who hold weekly early assessment appointments; local schools who have used this space for educating young people and for intense individual pre-GCSE support; and a local counselling service on an ad hoc need basis. The Basement Project frequently support parents, grandparents, and carers via the central telephone contact

Overview and Scrutiny

6th January 2025

and through the Drop-in, signposting accordingly when necessary to other agencies within the Worcestershire area.

3.24 The Basement Project adhere to safeguarding, confidentiality and GDPR protocols, updating processes through updates (NVCO, ACEVO, Centrepont et al). They work with an external health and safety organisation to help with post covid operating practices and complete online training to ensure best practices around ways of working. Their finances are supported and managed by Curo Professional Services, Bromsgrove.

3.25 The Basement Project have supported clients with items such as money for utilities; purchasing small items of furniture or electrical goods; school uniforms; items of clothing/shoes for interviews; winter coats and shoes; white goods; nappies; other debt support to prevent evictions such as rent arrears, council tax arrears and rent in advance payments for anyone who is rehoused. Based on last year and run rate, they expect to tactically help clients with some £12,000 of their own funding of the aforementioned necessities excluding access to other 3rd party items from partners such as white goods. They have been able to secure funds and donations to stock the Basement Project food bank and have been able to provide substantial parcels for a balanced diet containing fresh (eggs, milk, cheese, vegetables) and frozen foods along with the non-perishable staples, toiletries, nappies and baby milk. The value of the food parcel distribution to young people annualises at c£50,000. Included in this they have worked with the CAB, Worcestershire Children's Services, local schools and housing associations to secure food parcels for those suffering financial hardship. The food bank is rapidly evolving as a complementary service to the Drop-in Service and Floating support, adding both reach and solutions. They have added basic cleaning and sanitisation goods to the service which is making a difference in the domestic environments of clients.

“these food packs will help some of our most vulnerable families suffering hardship during the current crisis” (Pastoral Care Teacher)

3.26 Many young people they work with have lacked stability, positive role models or influences in their lives and even when housed these young people are likely to find it extremely difficult to maintain their tenancy and live independently. In many instances they have also failed to fully engage with other support agencies.

3.27 The young people they work with, as well as facing homelessness, are likely to have experienced family breakdown, physical and mental health issues, substance misuse issues, domestic abuse,

Overview and Scrutiny

6th January 2025

bereavement, issues with their sexuality, sexual exploitation and disengagement from education, training and or employment. Roughly half of the young people who access homeless services in England are between the ages of 18 and 24 (Homeless Link).

- 3.28 The Basement Project offer some stability, in that they are available if young people are in crisis, need help or to talk to someone and this is why the majority have readily engaged virtually and welcomed the continued support. A 'follow up' survey of Children and Young People in England conducted by the NHS, showed that in 11–16-year-olds 54.1% were more likely to say that lockdown had made their lives worse, and 59% of 17-22 year olds (NHS follow up survey on 2017 of Mental Health of Children and Young People in England July 2020)
- 3.29 The Mediation pilot that they started in late October 2019 in one local High School was starting to gain momentum when schools closed. They returned to this in 2022. The pilot was initiated following a piece of research they commissioned into the effect of mediation on relieving homelessness. The results indicated a very positive impact. The Basement Project Mediators have achieved good outcomes working both with pupils and their families. They are also able to provide Conflict Resolution where Mediation is not appropriate.

“it is an innovative project which gives our pupils a safe platform in which to share their feelings. This allows the pupils to resolve their issues in a highly supportive environment”. (Bridget Thomas Pastoral Support NBHS)

- 3.30 Through the Drop-in and Floating Support, a holistic approach to the young person's needs is assessed and a range of options are explored (e.g. housing options; financial support; health and wellbeing). Young people are supported in the choices they make, referrals are made, and ongoing and/or advocacy support offered to ensure they engage with other agencies as appropriate.
- 3.31 The Drop-in Service for young people is open Monday to Friday, 1200-1600hrs and works on both an appointment system and “walk-in” basis. Between 0900-16.30 for meetings and appointments and wider community use. It all links to the Floating Support and balancing the young person's need with the most appropriate form of support. The project is staffed with qualified Support Workers and several trained Volunteers. The latter will continue to form part of the 2023/2024 actions to increase reach and impact as they grow volunteer numbers. The Floating Support and Mediation is likewise provided by qualified staff. Floating support is delivered in the community with timings agreed between the client and the Support Worker. This is in the main

Overview and Scrutiny

6th January 2025

on a one-to-one basis. Their programme of related events brings young people together (2022 picnic in the park et al) as part of growing social interaction and building confidence.

- 3.32 Both the Drop-in and Floating Support provide assistance to access benefits, housing, education and employment; one-to-one support and group work to develop independent living skills (e.g., budgeting, cooking); and support to identify and address any physical and mental health issues by exploring their options; referring to appropriate agencies; young people often lead chaotic lives and need support to attend appointments.
- 3.33 The Basement Project offer one-to-one mentoring sessions on self-esteem and confidence building, offering professional counselling to clients after negotiating with a local practitioner for a reduced rate for his services; and from additional funding they have secured to fund this.
1. The Workers advocate on behalf of young people with housing providers (e.g., BDHT, local housing associations and Fry Housing), Nightstop Hosts, to secure accommodation for a young person, or to prevent eviction. The Workers also provide mediation and conflict resolution to enable young people to return to their family home, where appropriate.
 2. A programme of activities, including a programme of LifeWise sessions are available throughout the year, to develop the independent living skills, abilities, and confidence of the young people they work with.
 3. Hanover Street facilities are available for all clients, (e.g., a washing machine, a shower cubicle and kitchen) so practically, a young person can have a shower, do some washing or get a meal whilst visiting the Drop-in.
 4. Emergency food, toiletry and cleaning parcels to young people (including Christmas parcels containing Christmas goodies, tinned hams, and more basic food items to get through the Christmas period). So far this year (April to October 2024) they have given out 327 food parcels.
 5. In addition to giving out food parcels, they also provide financial assistance to young people. Living on a limited income frequently means that if an unforeseen expenditure happens, clients suddenly find themselves struggling to manage.

Overview and Scrutiny

6th January 2025

Management and Staffing of the Basement

- 3.34 The Basement Project service delivery is led by a Floating Support Manager, who leads their qualified support team and ensuring the quality-of-service delivery; with a Senior Support Officer and Finance Manager leading finances (supported by Curo Services who are a local accountancy company). They have a part time fundraiser with the remaining staff Support Workers who are solely focussed on client services. Their management structure very efficient operating model which was endorsed in their 2022 external evaluation.
- 3.35 Volunteers are interviewed, DBS checked where role dictates, have references taken, have a formal induction, and work for a probationary period before being 'officially' accepted as volunteers to ensure their suitability (and to identify any specific training/support needs). Once recruited and trained, volunteers provide indirect support to young people; have regular support meetings and access to ongoing training.
- 3.36 All staff access statutory training opportunities to increase professional and personal development and are encouraged (and do) complete person specific training to support their role. The team receive regular 121 meetings, attend a weekly client review conference and regular team meetings. They continue to outsource professional 'Clinical Supervision' from a psychologist to help support the staff team with the extensive degree of mental health issues that the young people are presenting with.

Promotion of the Basement

- 3.37 The Basement Project engaged the support of the Cranfield Trust in 2023 to review and develop the promotion of the Basement Project ranging from digital platforms and social media to funding, communications and overall image / messaging. This work and output was completed in both 2022 and 2023 and reflects the strategic focus on reaching more young people and preventative strategies to secure earlier interventions.
- 3.38 Their Fundraising Manager who with local communications company Big Splash, have progressively been able to focus on raising their profile in the BDC area to support the Basement Project reaching clients. This has led to much progress including raised social media (regular posts go out on Facebook, LinkedIn, twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp) activity; rebuilding and relaunching the Basement Project website; re branding in 2022; key events (Bromsgrove Pride, Picnic in the Park) and local fundraising such as the Big Give. They have

Overview and Scrutiny

6th January 2025

produced innovative videos and secured press coverage that includes the BBC.

3.39 They produce a quarterly Newsletter, which promotes the Service with the aim of generating referrals. This newsletter is emailed to supporters and partner agencies (e.g., Basepoint, local churches, and schools). Their outreach includes attending events and deliver talks and presentations to promote their service (e.g., to schools and church groups, Rotary Club, National Trust, Court Leet, WI)

3.40 Anticipated Outcomes:

- a minimum 175 clients will be provided with information, advice and guidance about the housing options available to them - to establish the right option for them and match young people up with local available housing; and to ensure they get appropriate housing in line with Council expectations that a tenancy can be sustained for at least 6 months, thus preventing repeat homelessness.
- A minimum 200 young people will receive support to develop independent living skills e.g. budgeting, debt management, healthy eating, cooking on a budget (either through the one-to-one support provided, or through the workshops they deliver) to ensure the young people have the key skills to maintain their tenancies/housing, which will reduce the incidence of repeat homelessness. One to one sessions will be delivered focusing on the development and enabling of independent living skills, such as self-confidence, self-esteem, and socialisation, as well as the more practical skills covering cooking and budgeting. To monitor this, feedback will be obtained after each session. Feedback forms and the Outcomes Star will also be used to record the one-to-one support. Using these, individuals are encouraged to acknowledge personal development and independent living skills gained.
- A minimum 200 young people will be provided with information on the benefits, debt services and employment and training opportunities available to them. This will enable them, with guidance, to make informed decisions and improve their socio-economic position (further reducing the likelihood of repeat homelessness).
- A minimum 150 clients will be provided with advocacy support to enable them to secure accommodation from local housing providers, or to prevent an eviction (thereby reducing incidents of repeat homelessness and improving young people's life chances), through continued support – from, for example, helping them maintain and decorate their accommodation, to prevent them being evicted, through to negotiating with debtors and supporting with social care plans.

Overview and Scrutiny

6th January 2025

- Using their food bank as a route to start the process of supporting young people in need they will increase their volume of food parcels to a run rate of no less than 700pa to a including 300 Christmas food parcels.
- Their preventative strategies will be reflected in monthly reporting and annual impact reporting. Through the work highlighted in this application they will increase reporting on preventative work, the number of people they reach and the earlier interventions. This reporting will complement the work they do in resolving complex cases and in securing tenancy retention.

3.41 The Basement project supports the council's statutory duty to homelessness and worked in partnership alongside other agencies in providing support and information to young people who find themselves in, or at risk of homelessness.

Worcestershire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

3.42 The Basement Project has always worked in line with the County Homeless Strategy and in recent years aligned strategy to the reference document entitled 'Worcestershire Homelessness and rough sleeping strategy as well as the more recent Bromsgrove Action Plan 2023 / 2024 which captures the core themes of "Prevention, Intervention and Recovery"

Added Value for Money

3.43 The Basement Project provide added value in that they will not turn young people away, no matter what their circumstances and maintain the capacity and ability to provide immediate support. They provide added value in designating the Drop-in as a community asset for other local organisations. They provide added value in their contribution to the various forums and meetings. Staff have experience in dealing with a wide range of issues and will:

1. Provide support for young people still in education or in employment.
2. Advocate on a young person's behalf with, for example, debt companies, utility companies.
3. Provide a free mediation and conflict resolution service to clients and their families to prevent homelessness – wherever possible and it is safe to do so, will try to keep young people in the family home
4. Work with partner agencies wherever possible to provide a holistic support service for young people, e.g., working with BDHT and other housing associations to access housing, to provide

Overview and Scrutiny

6th January 2025

workshops, working alongside Citizens Advice to provide debt advice, providing support to young people housed by other agencies, such as St. Basil's and Fry Housing. This is also added value as, by working in partnership prevents service duplication.

5. Provide financial help through client fund subsidising very low incomes to help with gas and electric, white goods, bedding, household items, winter clothing.
6. Access to their food bank on a need basis, the frequency of which is assessed on every individual's needs and circumstances.
7. Offer counselling and other therapy support, such as relaxation techniques. This provides alternatives to, or additional support with, prescribed medication, and can improve the mental health issues, low self-esteem and confidence issues that can prevent young people from accessing and sustaining accommodation.
8. Workers will support/accompany and transport young people to appointments, e.g., health assessments, social care meeting, court appearances.
9. Partnership work in the support of the new Youth Hub for younger people via the Children and Young Peoples Group, offering support and signposting to their service and most recently through the partnership with BARN and the other food banks in the development of the 'Support Bromsgrove' initiative and website.

Evaluating Success

- 3.44 Impact evaluation (day-to-day activity) is captured and recorded on their GDPR compliant InForm database (commissioned through Homeless Link) and detailed reports are obtained from here. This is aligned to contract and funder led outcome targets.
- 3.45 They set targets based on their strategy and the service is monitored regularly, and reports presented to the Board of Trustees for the Basement Project at their regular meetings to ensure they are meeting their proposed targets and outcomes. A member of the staff team also attends alternate board meetings to present a case study and inform the board of the work they are doing.
- 3.46 To evaluate the success of their work they regularly consult with beneficiaries asking for young people's feedback through a comments book, through feedback forms and verbally. They also use focus groups (of previous and existing clients) who give feedback on the services, and what is needed. Feedback is generated at regular intervals throughout the duration of everyone's support, as well as the start and end of the support offered. All this consultation information (from the questionnaires, client monitoring and evaluation sheets, feedback, comments forms and direct consultation with young people)

Overview and Scrutiny

6th January 2025

is also used to monitor and evaluate their work. Outcome Stars are also completed with all clients.

- 3.47 From this monitoring and evaluation, they know that in year (2022/2023), the Basement supported 247 (169 in 2021/2022) young people as regular clients with numerous more supported as non-clients, and the outcomes secured included: Securing temporary or permanent accommodation; Supporting young people to sort out their finances; Supporting young people to develop independent living skills; Supporting young people to take care of their physical and mental health; and to secure education and employment. In 2022/2023 they directly prevented 62 incidents of homelessness versus 44 in 2021/2022.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Council has statutory duty under the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) to assist those who are threatened with homelessness or experiencing actual homelessness and has placed additional duties on the Council regarding preventing and relieving homelessness.
- 4.2 The Homelessness Prevention Grant has been ring fenced to homelessness prevention and tackling homelessness by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.
- 4.3 The Domestic Abuse New Burdens Grant has been provided to ensure that councils comply with the requirements of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

5. COUNCIL PRIORITIES - IMPLICATIONS

Relevant Council Priorities

- 5.1 Homelessness Prevention Grant and Domestic Abuse Grant supports the Council's priority of Housing. It allows the Council to support a range of holistic services to help prevent or tackle homelessness and rough sleeping in the District.
- 5.2 The combination of practical support such as furniture compliment those services that provide outreach support to help clients access accommodation, sustain tenancies, manage budgets, engage in positive activities and access employment.

Climate Change Implications

- 5.3 Helping service users to develop life skills can support them to be more energy conscious and less wasteful with food.

Overview and Scrutiny

6th January 2025

6. **OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.1 The Homelessness Grant and Homelessness Prevention Grant will benefit customers by offering household's more options to prevent their homelessness, support them to remain in their own homes or help the Council to manage and support households in Temporary Accommodation.
- 6.2 The grant will also benefit the larger community as opportunities to prevent homelessness will be maximised.
- 6.3 Domestic Abuse New Burdens Grant will ensure that there are resources to support the provision of a range of services available to meet the needs of those victims/survivors of domestic abuse who become homeless and need support to set up a new home and recover from their experience, many of whom are women.

Operational Implications

- 6.4 The management and administration of grant forms a significant part of the Strategic Housing Team's day to day operations.

7. **RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 7.1 Without the Basement Project there is a risk that more households who are threatened with homelessness, or who are in housing need, will have limited alternative options. There is also therefore the risk that they may have to make a homeless approach and this could consequently lead to the following negative outcomes:

- Increased B&B costs with 80% having to be picked up by the local authority.
- Increased rough sleeping in the District
- Impacts on physical and mental health, educational achievement, ability to work and similar through increased homelessness.

8. **APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Appendix 1 Outcomes Monitoring Table

Overview and Scrutiny

6th January 2025

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Councillor Shirley Webb Portfolio Holder Strategic Housing	19/12/2024
Lead Director / Head of Service	Judith Willis Assistant Director Community and Housing Services	18/12/2024
Financial Services	Peter Carpenter, Interim Deputy Section 151 Officer	19/12/2024
Legal Services	Claire Felton, Assistant Director of Legal, Democratic and Property Services	23/12/2024
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)	Not applicable	N/A
Climate Change Officer (if climate change implications apply)	Matt Eccles, Climate Change Manager	N/A