



**ACTION**  
HOMELESS

**Breaking the cycle of  
homelessness in Leicester**

**2021-22**

## Our reach & impact: 2021-22



### Who did we support?

We provided housing and support to **463** people

- 24% were women & 76% were men
- On average our female clients were younger than our male clients but we supported people aged between 22 and 60
- 32% of our clients were from BAME communities
- We housed people with a variety needs and provided different types of accommodation as well as personalised support, ranging from low level contact through to intensive daily interventions.

### Helping people to move on

We supported **139** people to move into more secure and permanent homes

- **29%** moved into more suitable housing within Action Homeless, including permanent tenancies
- **16%** moved into other supported housing
- **19%** moved into a Local Authority tenancy
- **6%** moved into a Registered Social Landlord tenancy
- **11%** moved into a Private Rented Sector tenancy
- **15%** moved in with friends or family

**96%** of people we support feel they have a good relationship with their support worker

**88%** of residents feel able to make their own decisions about their goals

**90%** of residents rated us as a good landlord or better

# Our reach & impact: 2021-22



## Breaking the cycle by addressing additional needs

As well as help around homelessness and housing, we supported clients to address a range of additional needs including;

- Mental and physical health problems
- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Offending histories
- Family and relationship difficulties
- Domestic abuse
- Physical and sensory disabilities
- Learning disabilities
- Experiences of being in care
- Refugee and asylum seeker status

**42% of people accessing our accommodation this year, came to us after a period of rough sleeping or threat of rough sleeping and had additional needs due to this experience.** We have worked closely with our Local Authority to respond to this and have developed a number of specialist initiatives to support these people to break the cycle of their homelessness.

A significant number of people that we supported (41%) had at least 3 additional needs. The most common and pressing need, in addition to homelessness was mental health. After mental health, drug and alcohol abuse were most commonly cited as a support need by our clients this year. In order to support people with multiple and complex needs we worked with a range of specialist partners to ensure people had access to the specific advice, support and guidance that they needed to break their cycle of homelessness.

## Covid-19

92% of residents felt Action Homeless prioritised their safety during the pandemic.

## Emergency Winter Beds

19 people used our Severe Weather Emergency Protocol Winter beds

2 of these people moved directly into private rented sector tenancies

13 of these people moved into other Action Homeless services which better suited their needs

# Ben\*

## Consistent and personalised support

After leaving custody and experiencing a period of rough sleeping, Ben was referred to Action Homeless by the Local Authority. He had been fighting for custody of his child since becoming homeless and he had faced a number of obstacles including difficult mental health issues including PTSD and had struggled with substance misuse. He was receiving Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payments when he first came to Action Homeless.

The team at Action Homeless provided emotional support to help better manage his stress, to try to resolve conflicts and to help him settle into his new home as smoothly as possible in what was an extremely distressing time. The team encouraged him to engage with external services such as the charity Turning Point, a GP and various Mental Health services.

He also received support when completing a Housing Application form as the team discussed options outside of the Housing Register, and helped facilitate contact with Child Social Services by helping him to use computers provided by Action Homeless.

Since arriving at Action Homeless, Ben has moved into independent accommodation within the private rented sector. He has made huge progress and has made a number of positive changes including working for a construction company, training at the gym regularly, participating in charity boxing matches, and he has stopped smoking cannabis completely. He now also has regular contact with his son whilst the custody court case is still ongoing. He will often seek the support and advice of Action Homeless as we have supported him across all aspects of his journey and will continue to be there for advice and support in the future.

**Now in a stable home, Ben's future goals are now focused on his construction work as well as building relationships with his children, partner and friends.**

\*Name changed to protect identity

**'Working in partnership is central to achieving our mission to break the cycle of homelessness. By connecting our clients with specialist providers, we are able to ensure support is truly personalised and targeted'**

## Services & projects: Doing things differently



### Housing First

In December 2021, our Housing First project, funded by The Henry Smith Charity, celebrated its first full year of operation. A new and flexible approach to delivering support, Housing First has enabled us to break down some of the barriers faced by people with long histories of homelessness, crucially being able to separate their 'housing' from their 'support' and acting consistently and flexibly to respond to their needs. **86% of our Housing First clients are sustaining their accommodation from the point they joined the service.**

### Targeted interventions

We have continued to work with a range of partners in the city to identify and respond to people who are rough sleeping with complex needs, for whom existing services have been unable to break their cycle of homelessness. This year we opened 10 new living spaces on Stretton Road, specifically for people with high support needs who are vulnerable and at risk of losing their homes.

The project provides overnight security and floating support, offering a safe environment and a sense of community. **100% of people supported have sustained their tenancies since the project opened.** Flora Lodge, a partnership project for people with multiple and complex needs has continued to deliver accommodation alongside personalised support packages. With partners delivering onsite, the project has seen **an increase in the number of clients engaging with specialist support and in particular, addressing their substance misuse.**

**“With housing first, I am fortunate enough to offer my clients flexible and intensive support, this could be once a week or each and every lovely day. This offers so much more than the classic one support session a week. My days are shaped around what the client needs that day and how much support they require; which I think is really quite special.”**

Meg Jones, Housing First Officer

Services &  
projects:  
Doing things  
differently



“Thank you to the team at Action Homeless...who have supported our centre week in week out. The food donations were a lifeline for many families”

Eyres Monsell CYP

### Providing permanent homes - other services

For 9 years, our **Accommodation + (A+) service** has been offering permanent homes to people with experience of homelessness along with low level support which enables them to reintegrate into the community. Crucially homes offered through A+ are permanent homes, meaning people won't be asked to 'move on'. The sense of stability that this creates, supports people to achieve ambitions in other aspects of their lives. **40% of tenants have been in their home since the project began.** Thanks to a new partnership with Zone Developments, the coming year will see A+ will expand to offer homes to a total of 90 people, across 33 properties.

### Supporting children affected by homelessness

Building Blocks, funded by BBC Children in Need, addresses the impact of homelessness and insecure housing on children. Based within our Bridge House refuge, Building Blocks delivers one to one and group sessions to children under the age of 12 years and their families. This year we were pleased to secure an additional 3 years' of funding. During the course of the year, **we worked with 22 children. 82% reported progress and positive outcomes following involvement in sessions.**

### Preventing hunger and addressing food poverty

In March 2022, the Action Homeless Food Stop closed after 6 years of supporting people in need and marked the end of our tenure to coordinate Leicester's Emergency Food Partnership. During the final year of operation, Action Homeless continued to support a range of community food banks to become more sustainable through access to grants and capacity building measures. **During the life of the project, Action Homeless secured £160,000 of additional funding for the Leicester Emergency Food Partnership as well as £2.6 million worth of extra food brought into the city for distribution to those in need of emergency food.**

12,500 tonnes of food given out, this equates to 145,000 shopping bags full of fresh & ambient products

24,720 hours of volunteer time given by a dedicated team of community volunteers

30,000 adult beneficiaries and 24,000 children supported

# Charlotte

## A solid and secure foundation

Charlotte came to Action Homeless after leaving an abusive relationship and becoming a victim of domestic violence. She was under financial and emotional control from her abuser, and felt that she was treated as the person who had done something wrong, and not the victim. Always being asked, 'why didn't you just leave?' During the years that followed, Charlotte feels that she lost everything and turned to alcohol before accessing rehab at the cost of giving up her home. She then lost custody of her daughter as she became homeless and suffered from a long term mental health condition.

After leaving rehab, Charlotte lived at Unity House where she continued her recovery and was referred to the A+ team at Action Homeless. She has now been abstinent for 1 year. Here she met Denise who helped her get a self-contained A+ property, which was close by to mental health and recovery support. Charlotte was reluctant at first to accept this property as it was a one bedroom flat and she wanted enough space for her daughter to stay for overnight visits. However, after seeing the high quality flat, she decided to accept it straight away. All other residents in this building have had similar past experiences, so they all understand what one another have faced and remain in recovery together.

The team at Action Homeless have supported Charlotte throughout her journey into an A+ property, and have continued to support her as she uses services nearby including Unity House and Turning Point, where she is now trained as a Peer Mentor. With the support of Vicky and Denise at Action Homeless, Charlotte has begun saving as she budgets and pays her bills as well as re-starting a degree in Criminology at the Open University, as she was previously unable to complete her university degree due to long term mental health conditions.

Charlotte is still trying to get full custody of her daughter which is a huge motivator and keeps her focused on the next steps of her life. **Charlotte's ultimate goal is to provide a safe and permanent home for herself and her daughter by building a foundation they can then progress from.**

"When I walked into the flat for the first time, I was amazed. The quality of the home and the support have all been to a **really high standard.**"

Policy &  
partnerships:  
Embedded in  
our locality



## Leicester's Homelessness Charter

Action Homeless are proud to pledge our support to Leicester's Homelessness Charter and are committed to continuing to work with our partners in Leicester to improve outcomes for people affected by homelessness. During the course of the year, we have been actively involved as members of the Charter management group which sets strategic direction and have supported the securing of essential core funding to ensure the Charter remains sustainable.

## Moneywise Plus

Moneywise Plus is a partnership project aimed at improving the ongoing digital and financial competence of people living within Leicester and Leicestershire, supporting them to move towards employment, job search, education or training. **Action Homeless have two advisors based within our services who worked with 36 people living in our accommodation during the course of the year.**

## Community Transitions Project

Our partnership with Leicestershire NHS Partnership Trust expanded this year, increasing the number of spaces on offer from 5 to 11 for people on discharge from inpatient mental health services. This expansion, in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, meant that we were able to help more people to make a smooth transition into more independent living. **During the year, 5 people moved on positively either into supported housing or their own tenancy.** Close partnership working meant that those requiring a return to inpatient services were able to access these quickly and efficiently whilst avoiding homelessness.

## Partnerships with landlords

This year we've expanded the number of units of accommodation that we're able to offer thanks to the development of new partnerships with local landlords and property owners. In 2021, we received a grant from Nationwide Building Society that enabled us to do some focused work around engaging with private landlords, including development of a range of partnership offers, enabling the landlord to be as involved as they want to be. **During the course of the year, we secured an additional 35 units, 19 were tenanted by the end of March 2022 with remaining 16 due to be occupied by Summer 2022.**



# Dave

## A permanent home and peace of mind

Sadly, Dave lost his baby son at just three months old, in May 1994. This terribly traumatic experience had a major impact on him and was the catalyst for his depression. Over the years, both Dave's mental and physical health slowly declined, which also led to problems with alcohol. He became very introverted and was struggling with feelings and emotions that he felt unable to communicate to his loved ones. In the end, this resulted in the breakdown of his marriage. After he left the family home, Dave became homeless.

With the help of his brother, he was able to arrange to stay in a friend's caravan for two weeks. Following this, Dave had nowhere to go. After a quick internet search, Dave and his brother came across Action Homeless. They made a phone call and Dave was invited to attend a meeting with Denise, a Tenancy Sustainment Coordinator at Action Homeless. When Dave attended the meeting, he was very emotional and anxious. He didn't know what to expect and felt he was in a desperate situation. He was extremely worried about his own health and wasn't sure what help was available.

Just 2 days after this meeting, Dave collected the keys for his new home and with the help of his brother and Denise, moved his belongings into his new flat, where he's now been living for two months. He was the first tenant into the property, which comprises of four flats with two shared kitchens. The property is new to Action Homeless, the result of a partnership with Zone properties, and has been recently renovated. Dave was overcome with emotion when he was first shown his new home and was especially happy to have his own private en-suite bathroom. As well as help to find a home, Denise supported Dave to get his finances in order and helped him to ensure his Universal Credit claim and rent payments were set up correctly.

Dave is now feeling settled in his home and feels much more positive about the future. He gets on well with the other people living close by and feels comforted by the fact that Denise and the Action Homeless team are just around the corner or on the end of the phone should he have any worries. Registered with his local GP, his health concerns are being addressed and he is attending regular appointments to get the treatment that he needs. **He is once again enjoying life.**

"I can't praise Action Homeless enough. This flat is beautiful and I'm looking forward to adding my own little touches. I'm not going anywhere, **this is my home now**"

Co producing solutions: Driven by lived experience and insight



### Lived experience voices

Action Homeless remain committed to elevating the voices of people with lived experience of homelessness. We were pleased to support the development of the new HOPE Forum through Leicester's Homelessness Charter and are focused on how we capture the experiences and views of people who remain marginalised due to their homelessness and additional vulnerabilities.

### Action Trust

Action Trust is our social enterprise arm which offers work placements, training and paid employment to people with lived experience of homelessness. During the course of the year, Action Trust employed 5 people and provided volunteer placements. Action Trust was successful in securing a grant from the Baker Hughes Foundation to purchase a fully electric van which will allow the team to travel more efficiently between jobs. The team have continued to provide property and garden maintenance services within Action Homeless and externally.

### Connections Week

The Covid-19 pandemic prompted us to find new and innovative ways to connect with the people that we support. In place of an annual conference, we held a Connections Week with various events taking place across our sites and services. The events brought our Trustees, staff and 45 people with lived experience of homelessness together to get to know one another and share experiences. In addition, 195 people who were receiving support from us at the time, received well being packs in the post inviting them to connect with us in a range of ways.

### Women's Open Space

The voices of women experiencing homelessness are some of the most marginalised. Following discussions with women in our services, and in partnership with fellow local charity The Bridge, we launched our Women's Only Open Space event. The space sees women with personal experience of homelessness, coming together to gain peer support and share their insight and expertise around responses and solutions to homelessness. During the course of the year, we held 4 groups with a total of 27 different women joining us.

**79% of clients surveyed felt involved in the day to day running of Action Homeless**

**28% of our clients have been actively involved in sharing their experience through events, consultations and surveys**

**27 women have attended our Women's Open Space to share their insight and expertise**

# Sirri

## Safe spaces and tailored support

Sirri came to Action Homeless after she had fled domestic violence with her young daughter. She came to the UK to stay and complete her studies and become a teacher. Sirri stayed in our women's refuge accommodation with her daughter when she came to Leicester. She was left financially and emotionally trapped due to her previous abuser taking her money while she stayed in his home. She has increased levels of anxiety and had lost her confidence, independence and self-esteem. Sirri thought her future aspirations had vanished and had become unattainable.

The team at Action Homeless and Moneywise Plus were patient and supportive towards Sirri, as they created a safe and comfortable environment for her to share her vulnerabilities and past experiences without any judgement. Sirri also found that her Moneywise Plus advisor took time to listen to her and what she wanted, with no pressure about future projects or goals. They quickly established a positive relationship based on trust, which allowed them to work towards Sirri's personal development.

This included Sirri receiving a sim card, registering onto a Maths course and arranging assessments. Sirri's Moneywise Plus advisor also worked with her on her CV and job applications, and in the meantime organised a volunteering opportunity for her.

Sirri was also invited to the monthly Women's Group hosted by Action Homeless and The Bridge, exclusively for women with past experiences of homelessness. Here, Sirri's confidence has improved and she has taken part in activities including the In Her Strength creative writing workshops. Sirri has been offered a home through Action Homeless and received support and vouchers to settle her and her daughter into their new home. This included being awarded with a full gym membership for a year. Sirri is now much more positive and optimistic about her future, and she is grateful for all the support she has received from the Action Homeless and Moneywise Plus teams. She is able to go to the gym and take time for herself as well as being more present with her daughter. Her goals for the future include becoming a teacher and building on her education.

"I feel alive, I feel free.  
**I don't think I would  
have ever got this far  
without your  
support"**

# Our resources 2021-22



## Our people

At the close of the 2021/22 financial year, Action Homeless employed a total of **55 people**. The Covid-19 pandemic environment created some recruitment and retention challenges for Action Homeless. Staff teams have worked tirelessly to ensure that clients have remained well supported in times of staff shortages and continue to be integral to our success. **84% of staff members received training to help them to develop in their roles during the year.**

## Our properties

During the year we have continued to develop our property portfolio which meant as of March 2022, **we managed a total of 50 properties, providing 243 people with safe places to live at any one time.** 65 units of accommodation were fully self-contained and 24 units catered to families. We managed 12 properties on behalf of Housing Associations and 28 on behalf of private landlords. Action Homeless owns 10 properties which house 79 people at any one time.

## Our finances

Our latest accounts and financial reports are [available to view here](#). Our financial position has remained stable throughout the pandemic. We continue to reinvest any surpluses acquired into purchasing additional accommodation to meet the needs of people who are rough sleeping or facing homelessness in Leicester and Leicestershire.

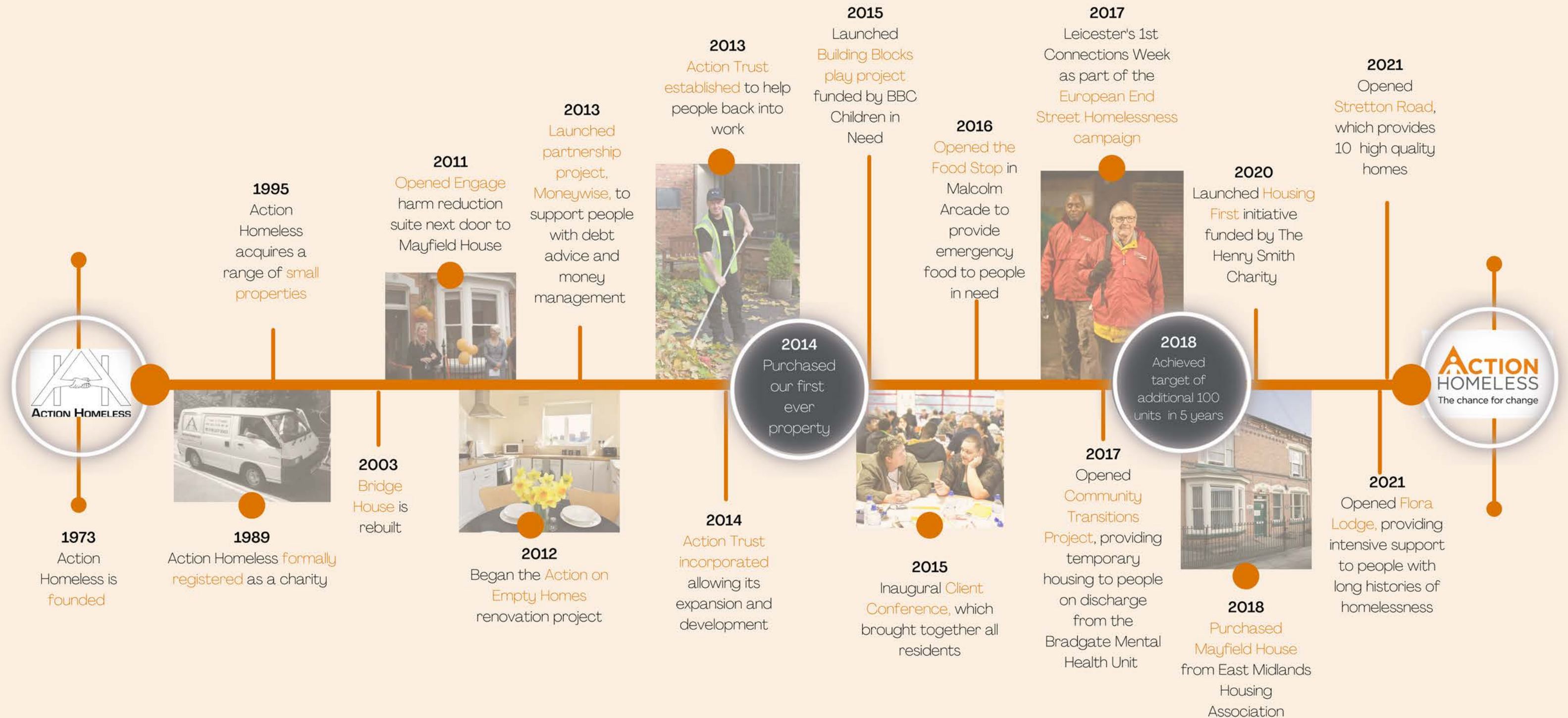
“It’s about people here, it’s the centre of what we do. It’s the highest standard we can provide. We are flexible and we adapt to where people are at.”

Employee comment, Investors in People report 2021



# What's next?

**2023** will mark **50 years'** of Action Homeless supporting people affected by homelessness in Leicester & Leicestershire. We are busy planning some special events to mark this momentous year. If you'd like to be involved or kept up to date with our plans please get in touch via [info@actionhomeless.org.uk](mailto:info@actionhomeless.org.uk)



# Thank you

We'd like to thank our many donors, funders, partners and stakeholders for your continued support. It is your generosity, help and guidance which has enabled Action Homeless to have a positive impact on the lives of people affected by homelessness.

To our Board of Trustees, staff team and volunteers, thank you for your continued dedication.

Finally and crucially, to the people with lived experience of homelessness who've shared their insight, expertise and personal stories, thank you for being a part of developing effective responses to homelessness and for raising awareness of the devastating impact that homelessness has on the lives of so many.

For more information, please visit:

[www.actionhomeless.org.uk](http://www.actionhomeless.org.uk)



Registered charity no. 702230

The logo for Action Homeless is contained within a circular frame. It features the word "ACTION" in orange with a stylized house icon above the letter 'A', followed by "HOMELESS" in black. Below this, the tagline "The chance for change" is written in a smaller black font.

**ACTION**  
HOMELESS  
The chance for change