

# **The TPAS 2010 awards: Best Practice in Supporting People**

**Supportive evidence for SHYPP award entry  
submitted by West Mercia Housing Group**

**I am only eighteen  
Yet I have seen  
Enough of this world  
The way it's crippled and curled  
So many people in pain  
Have nothing to gain  
From our ancestors rain  
To the lord above  
We express our love  
But to be free  
Means more to me  
To get rid of the greed  
That's what we need  
To heal our world  
And make it better  
All we need is to come together  
.....By a SHYPP foyer resident**

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# 1. Feedback from SHYPP service users

# 1.1 personal interviews

## **Matt Woollard, 24**

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"I became homeless in 2006. My parents didn't want anything to do with me and I had no support. I ended up dossing down on different mates' floors all the time, and not eating.

"And, because I lived right out in the sticks, to be able to get about anywhere I had to walk. This meant that I ended up walking up to 15 miles every day, without eating, and my feet became damaged and always hurt.

"I tried to get help. I went down every route that I became aware of to try and get help, but nothing ever came of it. The last organisation on my list to contact was SHYPP, and I will always be grateful that I went to them.

"I was assigned Duncan as my outreach worker, and my life began to turn around from there. He immediately started to help me. He made sure that I was eating, he helped me fill out all the necessary paperwork and he started helping me look towards the future.

"At the time SHYPP couldn't provide me with accommodation, but he found me appropriate accommodation elsewhere where they could also provide me with mental health support. But I remained a service user of SHYPP.

"Through SHYPP I took the Learning Power Award, where I learnt all about myself, and I completed a basic counselling skills course.

"I got so much out of SHYPP and I was so grateful that I decided to become a volunteer for SHYPP. For more than a year I helped out in the office, I did administration work, I worked in the foyer and I went out to schools as part of the schools project telling young people about what it's like to be homeless and teaching them through my experience.

"Thanks to the confidence, skills and re-focus that I gained through SHYPP I now have paid work for another housing organisation as a concierge support worker.

"And, I've now found even better work as a support worker for people between the ages of 16 - 65 in Worcester, so I'm about to move there and share a house with my sister.

"My life is now on a positive path. If I hadn't gone to SHYPP I don't know what I would be doing now or what shape physically or mentally I would be in. SHYPP changed my life, and I want everyone to know that they do an excellent job."

## **Luana Howes, 20**

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"I left home when I was 16 because my Mum was moving to France and I didn't want to go with her. The trouble was that I didn't have a clue what to do to look after myself. I didn't know how to get housing, how to get benefits or money, or what to do with my life. I felt very alone and very upset.

"A friend put me in contact with SHYPP. When I contacted them they came out to meet me at college only two days later and assigned me with an outreach worker. Jo immediately helped me. She listened to me and calmed me down and explained to me what my options were and helped me fill out all the forms I needed to do to get benefits. She provided me with the contact that I needed to feel that I was being supported.

"It was about this time that I found a room in a student house, but I was thrown out, I left college and I became homeless.

"My outreach worker continued to meet with me and help me throughout this time. I then moved into a SHYPP supported house in Union Street, where I lived and trained for nearly two years.

"I now have my own flat, which I love. I am also a volunteer for SHYPP, and, through SHYPP I am on an NVQ training course studying Supporting the Development Needs of Young People. I want to give back what I was given. I know what I want to do and I'm happy.

"SHYPP is amazing. For me the most useful thing was that the staff there understood me and were there for me to talk to and allowed me to let everything out.

"The staff at SHYPP really deserve an award. They work so hard and they have no idea how appreciated they are."

## **Barry Grimsley, 19**

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“Three years ago when I was 16 I became homeless. I had family problems so I could no longer live there. I moved out of the family home in Hinton. I was lucky enough to have friends who took me in. I lived with them for two years but it wasn’t ever supposed to be a long-term arrangement, because it was difficult for all of us.

It was when I was trying to find out about options open to me as a homeless person that I found out about SHYPP. The Connexions service put me in touch with them and they were very helpful. They found me a place to live in the Union Street foyer scheme. This scheme wasn’t right for me so they found me somewhere else to live, at another scheme in Newtown Road. It wasn’t just the place to live they gave me, it was support with other things, like managing my money. That was really useful.

“I am really happy here. I am at college studying for a horticultural qualification. I want to be a landscape gardener. My current place makes it easy for me to study as it is so private. If I wasn’t in my current accommodation, I’d probably still be living with friends. I’d find it much harder because there would be little privacy. I really appreciate what SHYPP has done for me.

“I think that SHYPP deserves to get an award. It would be good to see people who put themselves out to help people in need getting recognised. They make a difference to people’s lives.”

# 1.2 case studies

## Tony's story

In 2007 19-year old Tony (not his real name), moved from Coventry to Leominster in Herefordshire. He moved because he was in trouble in his home city where, linked to his wrongdoings, he had received threats of violence.

On arriving in Leominster he was homeless, so for six months over winter he camped in woodland. As well as his mental wellbeing, his physical health was suffering, and, because he had no fixed address he was unable to access benefits or a job.

He applied to SHYPP for help and was offered a place at the Leominster Foyer, which he gratefully accepted. He lived at the foyer for three months. During this time he was able to receive the benefits that he was due, thanks to the encouragement he received from the staff he was able to tackle his debts, and, as a result of the stable and supportive environment, he was able to re-focus himself on his future.

On leaving SHYPP Tony enlisted with the army. He has since had a tour of duty in Iraq and is now happily married.

## Happy families

Whenever possible staff at SHYPP do what they can to keep families together and foster good familial relations. During the 1990s and early 2000s one young family was being torn apart by the mother's degenerative multiple sclerosis condition. Sadly she became unable to tend for her children.

Over time the two brothers and one sister all came under SHYPP's care. At different times, as they came of age, all three moved into the Leominster foyer where they were given a stable environment. They were encouraged to achieve their goals, and they all knew that they had people to talk to who understood their situation and cared about their future.

As each sibling moved into the foyer, with their common housing link, each one was supported by the others, which was fostered through SHYPP staff. Today they have remained a close family unit. All three live close together in Leominster in their own homes and they remain very grateful for the support that SHYPP provided them.

## University students

In the past year SHYPP has helped three vulnerable young service users to turn their lives around and enter university. Kim Collier went off to study psychology at Swansea University, Tammy Coles is training for her nursing qualifications at the University of Worcester and Vanessa Lloyd-Bushell won a place to study English language.

Vanessa, who is a budding journalist, said: "I became homeless when I was 17 because of family problems. SHYPP really was a lifeline for me and helped me to get to where I am today. I don't know what would have happened if it hadn't been for this project, and I can't thank them enough."

## A young parent's story

SHYPP started working with a particular young mum after referral from the health team in Ross-On-Wye. The reason for referral was because she had post natal depression and previous psychosis before pregnancy.

When SHYPP met the mother of two boys, both under two years, she felt that any service was there to take away her children. She refused to meet or even answer the door. The third time a member of staff visited her home, she could hear movement so she phoned her to let her know she was outside. Eventually she opened the door and invited the SHYPP staff member in; it was clear she had been crying.

She opened up and explained that she was embarrassed that her living room was a mess which made her feel like she was going crazy. She wanted to present herself as a perfect mother and struggled for people to see her as she was.

The following few months were crucial for this parent. Through the Learning Power Award SHYPP helped her to identify her strengths and build up her confidence and she became a new person.

She began attending the young parent group at the children's centre and accessed other groups for her and her children. She then started planning trips and evenings out with other local parents.

She is now volunteering for the SHYPP group and helps to support other young parents. She also would like to return to education at University College Worcester.

# 1.3 service user surveys results

## Outreach service

Survey results of young people who have received help from the outreach service showed that:

100 per cent of respondents felt that they had been able to move on with their lives thanks to the support that they received.

## Lone parent service

Survey results of young lone parents who have received help from the lone parent service showed that:

91 per cent felt that the outreach service was useful to them

100 per cent felt that they were treated with respect.

## Foyer services

Surveys are undertaken every six months at all three foyers, plus exit surveys are conducted with all service users.

From this it can be seen that, in general:

90 - 100 per cent feel that their experience of the foyer has helped them with their ability to live independently

100 per cent feel that their time in the foyer has been positive and enjoyable

100 per cent would recommend the foyer to a friend in need of its services.

# 1.4 service user feedback

The following quotes show just some of the positive feedback we have received from service users.

## **Outreach service feedback**

"I know if I needed help I could ring up SHYPP in the morning and they would send someone out to see me the same day or ask me to come into the office."

"SHYPP told me my opinions matter. They helped me look at the future not my past."

"I know there is people out there that actually care and really help us out."

## **Foyer feedback**

"They are like parents."

"If not here, don't know where I'd be."

"Done more in three months than ever before."

## **Young parent project feedback**

"I would have been very stuck and unable to get into daily routines or pay my bills without SHYPP."

"My SHYPP Young Parent Worker is great."

"I got a lot of help to feel more positive about my life."

## **Supported housing and aftercare (SHAC) feedback**

"The SHAC project has helped me to gain the confidence I need to visit other SHYPP services and mix with the staff and young people. This has been positive for me as I can feel lonely living on my own sometimes."

"I don't think there is anything else SHYPP could possibly do, I think they do enough."

"I haven't anything negative to say about SHYPP. The people there have helped as much as can do and I'm very thankful for that."

## **Duty and crisis team feedback**

"I wouldn't like to think where I'd be without SHYPP."

"SHYPP has always been there, listened and sorted everything out for me. Thank you."

"SHYPP do their job really well!"

## **Nightstop feedback**

"It was really welcoming, I got spoilt."

"I had fun and felt welcome."

"It was a clean and tidy house. She [the host] was very polite."

"She [the host] was laid back and the house had a calm atmosphere"

## 2. Supportive quotes for SHYPP from individuals working at partner agencies

**Jane Slowey, chief executive of the foyer federation, said:**

“We accredited SHYPP in 2006 and we assessed them to be at the cutting edge of the foyer movement. There is a strong commitment from its parent organisations – West Mercia Housing Group and Kemble Housing – the leadership is excellent, the staff are dedicated and the residents are contented.

“The staff at SHYPP genuinely place the young people at the heart of what they do, and because of that they deliver high-quality services that meet its young people’s needs. They are also an excellent example of an organisation that has succeeded in setting up a holistic model that works well in rural areas.

“Any membership organisation, such as the Foyer Federation, is only as good as its members, and I am delighted that SHYPP, which is continually forward-looking, helps us to raise the bar for all foyers.”

**Derek Allen, change manager, homelessness, at Herefordshire Council, said:**

“As Homelessness and Housing Advice Service Manager for Herefordshire Council, I have been really impressed by the way in which the SHYPP team has helped us tackle youth homelessness across the county.

“SHYPP has worked with Herefordshire Council to ensure homeless young people can access housing options quickly.

“But crucially, SHYPP has also been willing to work with our homelessness prevention agenda, which enables young people to remain at home whenever they can do so. That's not easy, and requires a change in organisational outlook, but I can see it taking place in SHYPP's work with local schools, and in our quarterly joint case meetings.

“Those meetings see SHYPP and Council Homelessness Prevention Officers working closely together, anticipating individual housing needs, and responding to them in a way that reduces risk and need in the community – that's not something you see every day, and we know we're lucky to have such committed colleagues here in Herefordshire.”

**Richard Gabb, head of strategic housing services at Herefordshire Council, said:**

“SHYPP's commitment and support in preventing and tackling homelessness amongst young people has been and continues to be, crucially important to Herefordshire Council.

“With strong support and commitment from its local parent organisation, Kemble Housing and the group parent West Mercia Housing Group, SHYPP has proved willing to innovate in supporting the prevention of youth homelessness with schemes such as the Schools Project, Floating Support Services and their Herefordshire Foyers.

“SHYPP has continually proved willing to test out new approaches to assisting the Council in improving services and in cross-cutting priorities, for instance, around supporting care leavers into independence.

“SHYPP's support towards the managed move-on of care leavers has helped the Council achieve improved transitions from care to independence for young people.

“Youth homelessness continues to be a huge pressure in an environment where affordable housing is in short supply but in SHYPP we have a committed and professional partner who have proved themselves willing to respond flexibly to the challenges.”

**Tanya Everard, head of key stage 4 at Wyebridge Sports College, said:**

“At my request SHYPP has generously come into school for the last two years and done a series of workshops lasting three weeks per group with each of our Y10 classes as part of our PSHE programme and Certificate of Personal Effectiveness course.

“The workshops have not only raised awareness of the work SHYPP does and how people can become homeless but also challenges the stereotypical view of homeless people.

“They usually bring in young people who are being supported by them to deliver the workshops. All the workshops are well planned and delivered and good at engaging students.”

**Stuart McFarlane, Aftercare Team Manager  
at Herefordshire Aftercare, Children & Young Peoples  
Directorate, Herefordshire Council, said:**

“Herefordshire Aftercare works with SHYPP in relation to care leavers who are moving out into the wider world, where we need to support them to be interdependent.

“In particular Aftercare has worked with SHYPP over the past two years on the SHAC (Supported Housing AfterCare) project, where SHYPP provides a dedicated floating support worker for the project, working alongside our own Accommodation Aftercare Worker, to facilitate and enable care leavers who are moving on into dedicated Aftercare independent accommodation. To the best of my understanding, as a partnership project, SHAC is unique.

“Working with SHYPP is very productive. Working with us, we are jointly able to encourage and motivate Care Leavers to achieve their full potential in all areas of their lives . Not only does SHYPP fulfil a clear need in this area, but they are very helpful and very understanding.

“In fact, on the basis of the evidence we have collated through working with them, I wouldn’t say that they provide a good and professional service. Instead, I believe that they provide an excellent professional service and I don’t think that SHYPP gets the congratulations , praise or recognition that it deserves.”

**Richard Betterton, co-ordinator at the Herefordshire council for  
Voluntary Youth Services, and a voluntary member of the SHYPP  
management sub-group, said:**

“I’m really happy to talk about SHYPP as it is one of our favourite organisations. I believe that they are close to the top of their game, and they keep on reaching higher.

“We appreciate the professional role that SHYPP plays with the holistic services that they offer. We also recognise the way that they innovate. They are always seeking out the further needs and aspirations of the young people that they deal with and then proactively providing services to fill those needs.

“They relate to the young people that they work with and bring excellent skills and knowledge to the table with every organisation that they work with. They are outward looking and are continually looking to work in partnership with other organisations to provide the best outcomes for the young people.

“Ultimately they are effective because they do not bow to inappropriate pressure, whether from the young people, or elsewhere, and consequently they do not provide short-term solutions, but instead create an environment where the young people who access their service are offered a route to long-term success.

“SHYPP is a fantastic role model as an organisation from the third sector which provides valuable contribution to the community regeneration strategy for Herefordshire.”

**Jessica Buckley, programme co-ordinator for the homeless sector at Worcester College of Technology, said:**

“I oversee SHYPP’s portfolio for Learning Power in the Hereford area. This is a learning skills City and Guilds qualification where each young person is assessed and then they study for five modules linked directly to their needs, from budgeting and drug use, to confidence issues and healthy eating.

“I have a lot of time for the staff at SHYPP. They are dedicated to helping vulnerable young people move from dependence to independence. I like their whole approach to their work. They are professional, friendly, efficient and, what’s particularly important to me, honest.

“In addition the staff always seem happy and, whenever I go to visit them I find that that they generate a calm environment.

“But, they don’t seem to rest on their laurels. They always seem to be looking to improve and are open to suggestion. The staff at SHYPP are a pleasure to work with.”

# 3. Supportive quotes from official reports

## **SHYPP agency feedback survey, 2007 (a survey of staff at agencies which partner or link with SHYPP):**

### **General comments:**

- SHYPP is a fab service - keep it up!
- Many thanks for all the services you offer. Please keep growing and developing the educational and preventing sides of your work.
- SHYPP is a useful service that benefits many young people in Herefordshire. Without this service there would be little alternatives.
- A recent Foyer Federation report says you are doing very well.
- Need more in Ledbury - look forward to working with you!

### **Statistics from Supporting People's Impact Assessment Questionnaire, August 2008:**

- 95 per cent of respondents said that there were no other organisations like SHYPP in Herefordshire.
- 85 per cent of respondents said they wouldn't have wanted SHYPP to do anything differently.
- 100 respondents thought that SHYPP would offer support to a person from a minority group.
- 70 per cent said that without SHYPP they would either be homeless or in jail.
- 100 per cent of respondents rated SHYPP's services as good or excellent.

### **Statistics from SHYPP's outreach satisfaction report, December 2009:**

- 100 per cent of respondents said they would recommend SHYPP to someone else.
- 100 per cent scored SHYPP staff as excellent.
- 75 per cent scored staff as 'excellent' for helpfulness, the remainder ticked 'good'.
- 75 per cent scored staff as 'excellent' for professionalism, the remainder ticked 'good'.