

## **The future of Off the Streets service provision in B&NES**

Julian House has proudly supported the council's homelessness pathway for nearly 40 years – delivering outreach, emergency accommodation, and supported housing to some of the most vulnerable people in our community.

Like many charities, we've faced the triple threat of rising costs, growing demand, and funding cuts. These pressures have forced us to make difficult decisions to protect our long-term sustainability – most recently, the closure of our Bike Workshop social enterprise this October.

We don't take these decisions lightly. But we make them so we can continue delivering high-quality support across all our services in the South West.

In B&NES, we've had to direct a significant portion of our unrestricted charitable income to subsidise essential services – particularly the Manvers Street Hostel and our outreach team. These services have been underfunded by as much as £250,000 per year. Thanks to generous public donations and support from charitable trusts, we've kept them going – but even those sources are now under pressure due to the cost-of-living crisis.

Beyond the hostel, we provide 68 additional bed spaces across B&NES. Of these, 22 are entirely unfunded by the council – yet they still add vital capacity to the homelessness pathway. Again, we cover the shortfall through our own resources.

Despite this commitment, the future of the hostel remains uncertain. Our lease ends next summer, and we still have no confirmation of future funding or a new site. We've been raising our concerns about the future of the hostel for over two years and have been actively searching for a new site and submitted two detailed business cases at the council's request.

Unfortunately, delays in the council's procurement process have already cost us one potential location – and now a second is at risk.

The new Procurement Act was meant to streamline public sector commissioning and support local providers. But this does not seem to be the case here.

Combined with recent setbacks for other local charities like Bath Mind and DHI, and recent examples of bringing services in-house, our team is understandably concerned about what lies ahead.

We urge the council to act swiftly – both to secure the future of the off-the-streets service and to commit to a fair, sustainable budget for the homelessness pathway.

Julian House remains ready and willing to work in partnership with the council to end rough sleeping in B&NES. But we need the funding, the policy backing, and the political will to make that vision a reality.

Helen Bedser  
Chief Executive  
Julian House

