

Bespoke support with Sanctuary Supported Living

June 2023

The Dame Kelly Holmes Trust and Sanctuary Supported Living are delighted to announce their latest partnership, delivering personal development programmes to customers at four Sanctuary Supported Living young people services across the country.



The national, not-for-profit organisation provides accommodation, care, and support in over 650 services, which includes for young people aged between 16 and 25 who might be at risk of homelessness, care leavers, overcoming addiction, young parents, or experiencing family or relationship breakdown. Its supported housing services provide a safe place for young people to gain essential life skills and learn to live independently.

As reported by Homeless Link in 2020, “Young people valued organisations that encouraged participation, where their experiences of adversity were recognised, where they were provided with responsive and tailored support, and were supported to build upon their aspirations and strengths.”

Sanctuary Supported Living is the only housing association to partner with the Dame Kelly Holmes Trust and it's hoped that through the support of an athlete mentor – a different influence to any other support usually provided in the care and support system – that the young people will feel more tuned in and inspired to take control of their lives, where they look after their wellbeing and plan for a fulfilling and independent future.

Starting at the end of June, Trust athlete mentors will be delivering a bespoke programme with supported living services in Brighton, Basildon, Hartlepool and Weston-super-Mare helping those young people develop their confidence, well-being and self-esteem.

The programme's objectives have been shaped by Sanctuary Supported Living's customers following research undertaken by the Trust in early 2022. Athlete mentors from the Trust carried out listening exercises at 14 Sanctuary Supported Living sites and spoke to over 80 young people as well as staff to develop a greater understanding of some of the issues and concerns facing young people living in supported housing today.

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The effects of the pandemic were still very evident with young people feeling isolated and lacking support with many saying they had no clear plan for the future.

One recurring theme across the discussions was a focus on the individual. They highlighted that no two services are the same and no two young people have the same needs. The young people's advice was; when thinking about planning any future programmes, we should remember that "everyone is different and so each plan should be individualised."

Using this customer-led insight, the team at Dame Kelly Holmes Trust has included the following in this year's programmes:

- Instead of a fixed plan, we will offer flexibility to adapt the programme sessions and offer a blended programme with one-to-one sessions as well as group work.
- The first sessions will be used to 'frame' what the young people want. Asking what matters to them most at this time and what support they need and tailoring the programme to fit.
- The programme will focus on improving self-esteem, confidence, interaction/communication skills, teamwork skills and motivational workshops.

Feedback also highlighted young people's positive feeling towards more regular intervention, so the Trust's athlete mentors will be delivering 20 sessions over a five-month period to groups of no more than ten with a real focus on supporting young people to take the next steps in their lives.

Commonwealth fencing champion Claire Bennett will be mentoring in Basildon, former English number one badminton player, Jenny Wallwork is the athlete mentor for Hartlepool with Paralympic swimming champion Liz Johnson leading the sessions in Weston-super-Mare.

Former British boxing champion Hannah Beharry, who will be delivering the sessions in Brighton said: "I'm really excited to be going back to Brighton to be working with the young people living there. I know from previous experience of working with people like Leah and Alan, the impact a programme like this can have, and with the addition of the 1-1 sessions and the ability for individuals to choose their path, I know this programme is going to have an even greater impact than before. I can't wait to get started."

Dave Shaw, Director of Sanctuary Supported Living added: "We're really pleased to be working with Dame Kelly Holmes Trust again. The programme is a phenomenal learning opportunity for our young customers. As they work with elite athletes to explore the importance of attitude and mindset, they are encouraged to take control of their own futures by focusing on their aspirations and unlocking their potential to thrive in their communities."