

The difference we're making
in communities across Kent



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Porchlight is a limited company registered in England and Wales.
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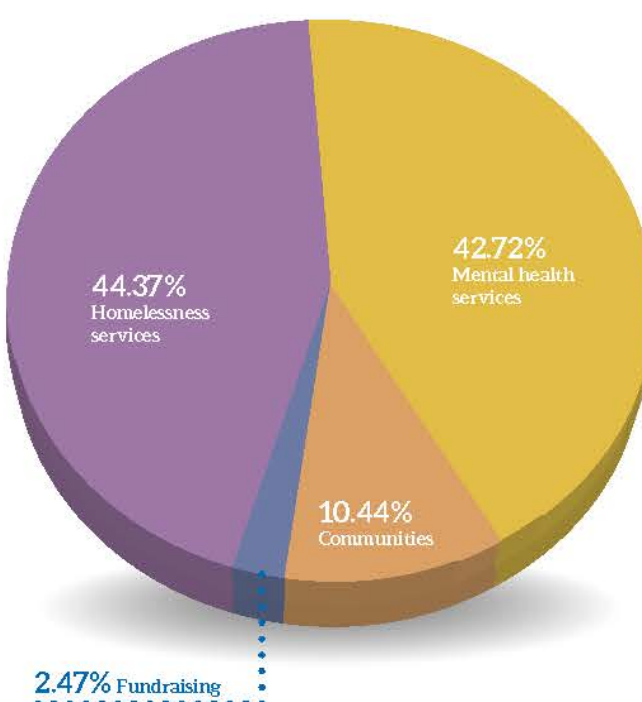
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Certified for ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management, ISO 27001:2013 Information Security and ISO 14001:2015 Environmental Management.



Expenditure breakdown 2021-22



To find out more about how we spend our statutory and voluntary funds, visit our website to view our impact report and financial statements porchlight.org.uk/our-publications



The difference we're making

In 2021/22



Working in communities to help people manage the rising cost of living

The cost of living emergency is intensifying. The government's economic measures are not addressing the root causes of homelessness and poverty, with devastating consequences for the people we support.

It's why we're working in the heart of our communities to help people before their problems reach crisis point.

One way we do this is by running Porchlight Open Door (POD) meet-ups. They are friendly get-togethers that help people to connect with the services and support networks they need within their community.

People can get information and advice about things like housing, debt or benefits, try new activities or just have a cup of tea and a chat in a warm space.

There are sessions to help people improve their health and wellbeing, including cooking on a budget, fitness, and mindfulness.

And because we know mainstream employment support doesn't always meet the needs of the people we're working with, we have staff who run intensive employment programmes that help people to build the skills and confidence to get a job.

Our PODs are based in Kent's most deprived communities, connecting the hardest to reach, most vulnerable people with the help and advice they need to build healthy, independent lives.

Last year, we ran 260 Porchlight Open Door sessions and supported 174 people into work.

"We're here to listen and to support. It's about giving people the tools they need to take positive steps forward and move closer to their goals."



David, employment worker

We're proud of our reputation as Kent's leading homelessness charity



We're here for people who have nowhere to go and no-one to turn to. Some are living on the streets, others need our support to prevent or resolve any issues that could put them at risk of homelessness.



We prevent

We stop people from losing their homes and help others to live safely and independently in the community.

We provide

We work with people on the streets, in our supported housing and in local communities. We help people with their mental health, housing, education and employment so they can get where they want to be in life.



We challenge

We're fighting for a fairer society and we won't give up until everybody has a safe place to call home and the chance to make a positive contribution.

"We're keeping the door open"



Funding for homelessness services in Kent is being cut just as the rising cost of living is pushing households to the brink of disaster.

It's a frightening prospect – people who can no longer keep a roof over their head will have nowhere to turn.

We're doing everything we can to keep the door open, by rebuilding homelessness services here in Kent.

Our vision for the future isn't a one-size-fits-all approach because everyone's journey into homelessness is different. By tailoring support to each person's circumstances, and working with partner organisations to bring housing and health services together, we can turn the tide on homelessness and rough sleeping.

But the cuts in Kent will hit the poorest and most vulnerable the hardest as our ability to continue the work that's needed is threatened.

As the cost of living crisis intensifies, we're seeing an increase in the need for support for some groups and widening mental health inequalities.

We're working with NHS, public health and local government partners to identify key areas of need and improve mental health services across the county.

Our teams are based in Kent's most deprived communities, helping people to manage any problems they are facing. If debt, financial insecurity, difficulties with benefits or the threat of homelessness aren't dealt with, people's mental health often gets worse.

Young people are particularly at risk of not getting the help they need. We're expanding our support for this vulnerable group to stop any mental health problems following them into later life.

As underfunded public services are squeezed even further, the challenge is to get the best from collective resources and we know that charities like ours have a critical role to play.

These are the hardest of times, but we're determined to grasp new opportunities and do whatever it takes to make sure that help for the most vulnerable people in Kent is here to stay.

Mike Barrett, chief executive

Homelessness services

Homelessness is complicated and some people need more support than others to move away from it. We take a person-centred approach to help people recover and rebuild their lives.

Outreach

Our outreach team goes out to find people who are living on the streets. They help them into suitable accommodation and connect them with support for any problems they are facing.

"At night I walked up and down, with blisters on my feet" Jacqui

Jacqui became homeless after losing her job. She was forced to sleep rough because universal credit payments weren't enough to keep a roof over her head. With nowhere to go and nobody to turn to, she felt powerless.

"I got a part-time cleaning job in the day but it wasn't enough to help me off the streets."

When we found Jacqui, she'd been sleeping rough for 18 months. We helped her find somewhere to live and gave emotional support that allowed her to begin trusting people again.

"I was saved – I don't know what would have happened to me if Porchlight hadn't helped."

Preventing homelessness

The best way to tackle homelessness is to prevent it from happening in the first place. We provide specialist support to help people keep their home or manage any problems that are putting them at risk of homelessness.

Tenancy sustainment

We help people manage their tenancy so that they can move away from homelessness for good. It could be helping people with benefits, budgeting and understanding and paying bills, or advice on looking after a property or managing relationships with landlords and neighbours.

Supported housing

Supported accommodation isn't just about housing; we provide the emotional and practical support people need to plan for their futures. Residents have regular meetings with their support worker where they discuss the next steps, whether that's learning new skills, getting employment advice, or reconnecting with family and friends.

Our hostels and shared houses are a safe environment where people can recover from the chaos and stress of homelessness and take steps to rebuild their lives.

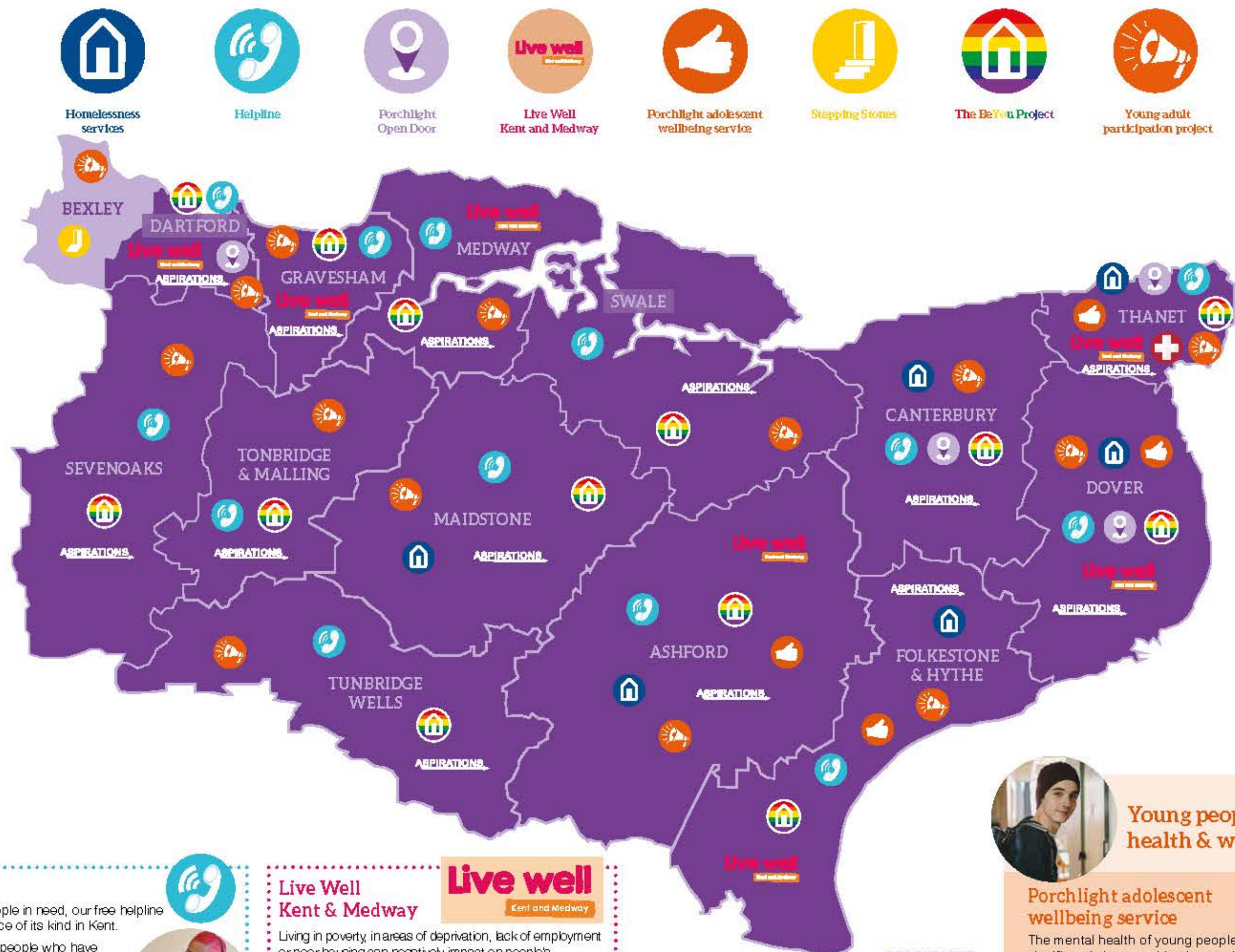
We run Housing First schemes for people with the most complex needs who often have long histories of rough sleeping. The scheme provides people with a permanent home and ongoing support to help them find stability and break the long-term cycle of homelessness.

Stepping Stones

Our Stepping Stones project provides accommodation for single women, and women with children. We also offer community support to individuals and families who are at risk of homelessness.

The team supports people with money management and maintaining a tenancy, helping them to break down the barriers to permanent housing and improve their financial resilience.

To support clients with their onward journey, we run workshops on topics such as healthy eating and budgeting, and activities to support their health and wellbeing.



How your donations help

Many of our vital services rely on donations to keep going. Will you help us support some of the most vulnerable people in your community?

£30 could pay for a basic starter pack of food and toiletries, helping someone feel cared for on their first night in one of our hostels



£75 could fund a three-hour support session, helping people who are sleeping rough to move off the streets and start rebuilding their lives



£125 could fund five personal support sessions to help someone keep their home



Donate on 01227 813199 or at porchlight.org.uk/donate

Helpline

A lifeline for people in need, our free helpline is the only service of its kind in Kent.

We're there for people who have nowhere to go and no one to turn to. We help people to access our own services, as well as food banks, drop-in centres, places of safety, mental health support and more.

We're the voice on the end of the phone giving advice and support, and reminding callers that someone still cares.



Supporting homeless hospital patients

When someone who is homeless is discharged from hospital they often return to the streets, where the cycle of poor health continues. Our pilot scheme at the QEQM hospital in Margate ensured patients who are homeless or at risk of becoming so have access to support for housing, mental health, drug or alcohol problems and debt once they leave hospital.

Aspirations

Aspirations supports people whose mental health is a barrier to them gaining employment. The service operates right across Kent and Medway.

Aspirations is a project funded by the European Social Fund and The National Lottery Community Fund. Aspirations funding ends in June 2023.



Live Well Kent & Medway

Living in poverty in areas of deprivation, lack of employment or poor housing can negatively impact on people's health and wellbeing. This means that poor mental health outcomes are common amongst the people we support.

Live Well Kent & Medway brings together a network of organisations to support people with issues that affect their mental health and their ability to live as independently as they would like.

For example, our community link service works alongside GP surgeries to connect people with support in their local area – and helps to reduce pressure on the NHS.

Our community housing service helps people with mental health issues to access appropriate housing, and our recovery service is for people who have experienced severe mental illness and need longer-term support.

"Now I have purpose again" Dee

When Dee became unable to work because of health problems, she felt like she had no purpose. On top of coming to terms with losing her mobility and her job, Dee struggled to apply for financial support.

It was a difficult time, she says. "Not being able to do anything makes you feel hopeless; worth nothing." Dee was put in touch with our community and mental health support services. With the help of our staff, she was able to attend coffee mornings and get more involved in her local community.

Now she's a valued member of our client representative team, helping us to shape the way Porchlight operates. "I'd lost my confidence. But now I take pride in what I do."



Live Well Kent & Medway is delivered in West Kent, Medway and Swale by our partners Shaw Trust.

Porchlight Open Door

Porchlight Open Door helps people to connect with the services and support networks they need within their community.

Working out of local spaces, anyone can come along to access the information and skills they need to build a healthy, independent life.

We provide a range of support and activities to help meet people's needs, whether that's help with housing, getting new skills and finding a job, or improving their health and wellbeing. We work with other local charities and service providers to make this happen.

"It changed my whole life" Aaron

Aaron's early life wasn't easy. He experienced abuse, struggled to make friends, and got into fights. He went on to develop severe mental health problems and started self-medicating with drugs and alcohol.

We suggested Aaron attend one of our Porchlight Open Door meetups. He started taking part in fitness sessions there, which gave him the opportunity to exercise and connect with others at the same time. "It just changed my whole life, literally overnight. It helped me come into my own."

Now Aaron regularly leads the fitness sessions and has become part of the team. People have even started coming to him for advice or a chat.

"I love helping people, just knowing you've put a smile on someone's face."



Young people - mental health & wellbeing

Porchlight adolescent wellbeing service

The mental health of young people has been significantly impacted by the pandemic. But lack of capacity in specialist services means that many children and teenagers struggle to access the support they need.

We run Porchlight's adolescent wellbeing service (PAWS) to give extra help to young people and their families who are going through a difficult time. This may be related to an emotional issue such as anxiety, a family communication breakdown, substance misuse or offending behaviour.

We provide support to improve the young person's mental health, emotional wellbeing, and communication skills. This is done by helping them to build resilience and to develop the necessary skills to achieve their goals.

"I've seen such a transformation in him." He's less anxious and we can do more as a family"

With the help of PAWS, L has overcome anxiety that left him practically housebound because he was nervous to be around others. He says: "I was saved – I don't know what would have happened to me if Porchlight hadn't helped."

Young adult participation project

Our young adult participation project looks at the experiences of young people who have used mental health crisis services.

The aim is to amplify the voices of young adults and their families, carers, and wider support network, and empower them to make long-lasting change to mental health and crisis services across Kent and Medway.

The BeYou Project

The BeYou Project provides safe spaces and support for young people in Kent who identify as LGBTQ+ or are questioning their sexual or gender identity.

We also offer information and advice to friends, parents and carers about how best to support the LGBTQ+ young people in their lives. Our team deliver training in schools to promote allyship and help teachers and students create environments where everyone can be themselves.

"I feel more confident going outside as myself" Tyde

Tyde was a few months into hormone replacement therapy when he learned about The BeYou Project.

"I experience anxiety, but having a safe environment where I can make friends with others from the LGBTQ+ community has helped me feel more comfortable."

"I felt unable to express myself publicly, but now I feel more confident going outside as myself. It also reassured me that I wasn't the only LGBTQ+ person where I lived."

There is no pressure for young people at our BeYou meet-ups to discuss LGBTQ+ related issues, until they feel ready to.

Tyde says: "If you want to talk about something you're going through, you can – but there's no pressure."



Porchlight