

STONEPILLOW CHICHESTER HUB IMPACT REPORT

Chichester City Council generously awarded a grant of £5,000 per year for three years between April 2024–April 2026. This was to enable Stonepillow to provide direct access to a safe place, meals, showers, clothing and advice for individuals in need via our Chichester Hub. Below outlines the impact we were able to make through our Hub, thanks to this grant.

2025/26 OPERATION:

The hub maintained its 7-day operation, opening Monday–Friday 9am–5pm, Saturday and Sunday 9am–1pm. On weekdays, we continued to split the day into two sessions:

- Weekday mornings 9am–1pm – open house, where anyone can attend for food, use of laundry facilities and showers, clothing, advice and support.
- Weekday afternoons – 1-2-1 appointment-based support, interventions from wider services and activities that support their journey towards independence.

Weekends we opened 9am–1pm to continue providing services which met client's immediate needs, while offering safety and respite from the street.

The Hub plays a vital role. It acts as a first point of entry for those sleeping rough or under the threat of homelessness as well as being a gateway to wider services and support.

- Providing direct access to a safe place, meals cooked by volunteers, showers, clothing, laundry facilities and advice, support and advocacy which is tailored to the individual needs of each client.
- Carrying out risk and personal needs assessments to identify their needs particularly around housing, health and work.
- Making available onsite, or through referrals to appropriate partner agencies: GP appointments; personal care – haircuts; housing; benefits; substance misuse (inc. needle exchange); mental health support; support for learning difficulties; advice and guidance education and employment.
- Monitoring the impact of the service on individuals and, using the resulting data to refine the services and support pathways provided.
- Continuing to facilitate access to a range of move-on opportunities and accommodation and to continue to support their resettlement.
- Working in partnership with other organisations and clients to offer the best service possible.

2025/26 IMPACT:

- **365 people** accessed the hub (Apr 25 - Feb 2026)
 - 64% existing clients / 36% new clients
- They made a total of **6,374** visits
 - 4,424 (69%) visits made by existing clients / 1,950(31%) visits by new clients
- Majority of clients are male (81%) and White British (81%)
- **53% had a local connection**, while 27% did not and 20% unknown
- Average overall daily visits across the year were – **20 clients per day**
 - Weekday average – 23 clients
 - Weekend average – 10 clients

TYPE OF SUPPORT ACCESSED:

These services are alongside wider activities and support offered by external agencies via our hub, e.g. GP/mental health appointments, wellbeing and social activities.

Service/support description	Total for 2025/26
Meals	3,431
Advice & advocacy	487
Benefits appointments	73
Housing appointments	583
Showers accessed	523
Laundry facilities accessed	292
Clothing, bedding, toiletries	59
Use of computers	629
Use of phones	144
Pick up post	96
GP appointments	108
Change Grow Live	11

We have seen a significant rise in the number of appointments made, particularly for support around housing and benefits. Computer usage has also risen sharply.

- **Housing** appointments **increased 415%** from 113 in 2024 to 583 in 2025/26
- **Benefits** appointments **increased by 82%** from 40 in 2024 to 73 in 2025/26
- **Use of computers rose 100%** from 313 uses in 2024 to 626 uses in 2025/26

This highlights the vital role the hub plays in not only meeting immediate needs, but also advising, guiding and advocating in areas which are key to enabling people to take the next step off the streets and into housing. While increased computer usage indicates that as more services have moved online, barriers to accessing support have increased.

Early in 2025, with the support of IBM, we were able to deliver a couple of digital workshops. One client, who is in his 50's, who had never been shown how to use a

computer before said: **“Thanks so much for the course and laptop. I never thought I would be able to use a computer, but now I use the laptop all the time.”**

In December, through a joint bid with the University of Sussex, Health Innovation Kent, Surrey and Sussex, and Turning Tides, we secured government funding to deliver digital inclusion support. Funding also enabled us to purchase laptops and mobile phones, which we are distributing among clients, allocating according to their needs and living arrangements. Sessions will run until the end of March, with learning from these sessions being used to create a replicable digital toolkit.

We have also secured further funding from Hyde Housing’s Charitable Trust to continue to deliver weekly digital support groups, as well as art workshops, for the next two years, helping to reduce the digital divide and provide further meaningful activities which provide purpose and improve wellbeing.

VALUE OF STONEPILLOW DAY HUB

VALUE TO PEOPLE WHO ARE HOMELESS

When someone who is street homeless approaches the council, the process often feels like a transaction – share information or you don’t get support. One client recently said, “You pay for services without actually paying for them.” Sharing a lot of very sensitive information can be distressing and may result in someone not seeking further support.

While we do gather information, we do this at the client’s pace and it is never a prerequisite to accessing the hub and our support. Because we see clients regularly, often daily, we have the time to build trusting relationships. Relationships where the client feels safe to share their experiences and allow us, when the time is right, to support them with approaching the council.

Research shows that 94% of people experiencing homelessness have suffered trauma, often including Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). This leads to deep mistrust of people and services. Many of the people we support also live with personality disorders. Often, when clients are asked questions about their past, this can trigger a fight or flight response.

Having a place like the Hub, where trust, time and safety come first, helps break down these barriers. With support from Stonepillow it makes accessing homeless advice possible, for those who might otherwise be excluded.

“When I first came to the Hub, the staff made me feel at home and not alone. Because I did feel very alone at the time. I got beaten up on the street a lot. The

Support Worker has done fantastically trying to get me into accommodation. I come to the hub every day. Before, I didn't eat. Now I can have breakfast and lunch. I try to fill up as much as possible because those might be my only meals. The hub is fantastic. I don't know what I would do without them"

VALUE TO THE WIDER CHICHESTER COMMUNITY

We are experts in providing wraparound support for people experiencing homelessness. Meeting immediate needs, providing advice, advocacy and wider support through the co-location of partner agencies, such as substance misuse, counselling, GP and sexual health services.

We have well established pathways for additional support for clients such as facilitating engagement with mental health services, domestic abuse support and with ETE support. Members of our wider staff team operate from the hub, including our substance misuse and alcohol related brain injury support worker and mental health practitioner, which means we can be agile in meeting clients need and providing specialist support.

We have a weekly 'Pathways meeting' in which staff across residential services and hubs come together to manage move-ons and effectively triage clients. This ensures people are referred quickly to the correct level of support to end their rough sleeping or homelessness. This quick, flexible approach is unique to a specialist homelessness service that other housing providers are unable to deliver. There can be ongoing support offered for rough sleepers who were initially seen in the hubs, but have successfully moved into either high support hostels or low to medium need supported accommodation.

We are collaborative, working with multiple agencies and stakeholders to not only deliver the best outcomes for homeless people in the Chichester District, but to also ensure that Chichester City remains a destination residents want and feel safe to visit and a place where local businesses continue to thrive.

Community ASB Meeting

During 2025 we received a few complaints from businesses and residents neighbouring the Hub. Our Deputy Hub Manager, Liam, initiated a meeting with stakeholders at the Hub, including:

- Stonepillow
- Local residents and businesses
- MP's office
- Police
- CDC community team

Discussions focused on issues and solutions, including the introduction of new rules for hub uses. Creating a trauma informed and safe space for clients, staff, volunteers, and neighbours, as follows:

- Bag searches
- No drinking in front of the building
- Clients who are heavily intoxicated are not allowed access

We also advised residents on actions they could take, such as reporting directly to Liam and to the police. The Police and CDC provided updates on wider community actions, such as the PSPO (Public Space Protection Order), which gives police the right to stop street drinking.

We explained what we do and the challenges rough sleepers face. This improved understanding among residents, with one business providing the following feedback:

“I wanted to say tonight that the changes you have made a monumental difference, we all really appreciate it. We personally haven’t had a single issue occur, which considering the weather and prior years, is truly amazing. We usually have to warn or stop the younger girls from going out to empty the bins or take out recycling due to prior issues, but we have zero concerns right now and wanted to make sure I passed on our appreciation to you and the team for making the change. We also appreciate the time you take to meet with us.”

If the hub didn’t exist it is likely that antisocial activity would increase. With nowhere to go and nothing meaningful to do with their time, people who are street homeless are more likely to drink or take substances. Increased states of intoxication often lead to arguments, altercations between clients and sometimes the general public. People are more likely to loiter in public places for longer, which could have an increased negative impact on local businesses and the local economy. All the while the hub operates, we minimise these occurrences.



CHICHESTER CITY COUNCIL – 2025/26 IMPACT – CASE STUDY

The case study below is just one example of one client's journey through our services, demonstrating the vital role the hub plays in enabling people who are street homeless to take the first step towards accessing help and support.

BC was approached by the CDC outreach team while experiencing street homelessness in Chichester. He had recently left a flat in Worthing, where challenges related to substance use and mental health had become increasingly distressing. BC shared that the environment had become overwhelming, and he felt that returning to rough sleeping was a way to regain a sense of control and safety.

BC has experienced multiple episodes of homelessness throughout his life. Initially, he did not engage with the Stonepillow hub, but the outreach team maintained regular contact, offering consistent support and gently reminding him that services were available whenever he felt ready.

Over time, BC began to access the hub on his own terms, initially attending once or twice a week to meet essential needs such as showering, seeing a GP, and washing clothes. As he became more familiar and comfortable with the space, his visits became more frequent.

The hub team supported BC with a referral to the RSI navigator and a local hostel. The navigator provided intensive, person-centred support, assisting BC with accessing healthcare, engaging with CGL, and exploring housing options.

BC moved into the Stonepillow hostel, where he stayed for five months. During this time, his presentation stabilised, and he expressed that he felt ready to move on from 24-hour support. He was subsequently referred to Stonepillow's supported accommodation, where he could continue his recovery journey in a more independent setting

It took time for BC to feel safe and build trust with the hub team. He expressed a deep sense of mistrust toward services, shaped by past experiences, and initially did not feel ready to engage. BC described his life as a "revolving door," reflecting feelings of hopelessness and uncertainty about the future. At that stage, engaging with support services did not feel meaningful to him.



With consistent, compassionate outreach and a non-judgmental approach, BC gradually began to build trust. As this trust developed, he started to engage with the Stonepillow pathway, beginning with meeting his basic needs at the hub and then being supported to access more intensive services. This pathway has played a key role in BC's stabilisation, offering a coordinated and holistic approach that included vital wraparound support from other services.

The transition through Stonepillow's services, from initial contact at the hub to supported accommodation has helped create a safe and structured environment for BC to continue his recovery journey at his own pace.

BC is currently living in supported accommodation, where he continues to navigate challenges related to mental health and substance use. Despite these ongoing difficulties, BC has expressed a sense of readiness to move forward and take the next step toward independent living. He is actively exploring private rental sector options and has begun the process of applying to the housing register. This reflects BC's growing confidence and desire to regain autonomy in his housing journey, supported by the foundation of stability and care he has received through the Stonepillow pathway.