



Report to:	STOCKPORT HOMES MEMBER COMMITTEE <i>15 October 2024</i>
Report of:	DIRECTOR OF CUSTOMER SERVICES
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Type of Report	<i>Assurance</i>
Title of Report:	SKYLIGHT ANNUAL REPORT
Purpose of Report:	To provide an update to Members Committee on SKylight's key achievements and activities during 2023/24
Recommendation(s):	That Members Committee note and discuss the progress made
Confidentiality	Non Confidential
Resource Implications	SKylight services are funded by a range of sources including external funding, contract income and Gift Aid. SKylight continues to explore a wide range of opportunities to secure external income and contracts to bring additional resources and services to the residents of Stockport.
Impact on Risk Appetite and Risk Register	SKylight has defined its risk appetite for Diversification and Growth as 'Open' with a clear eagerness to grow and develop the business into a high-performing organisation, all opportunities and growth are evaluated in a consistent and robust manner to support SKylight's ambitions whilst not exposing it to unnecessary risk.

	Risk Number	Risk Description	Risk Mitigation
	3	SKylight's finances are not well managed	Robust, detailed budget management systems in place. SKylight continues to pursue external opportunities to diversify income streams and deliver additional services within the Borough.
	4	Stakeholders do not fully understand SKylight's strategic aims and relationships are not well managed	Detailed Marketing & Communications Plan in place for SKylight. Officers continue to nurture a wide range of stakeholder relationships to ensure strategic aims are understood and opportunities for collaboration are fully utilised.
Customer Voice	SKylight accesses funding and develops services which bring additional resources into Stockport and benefit customers. Individual services engage and secure the customer voice in a variety of ways, from formal engagement and evaluations in programmes such as GM Housing First through to informal engagement and outreach through services such as the Rough Sleeper Initiative.		
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion implications	Services delivered within SKylight are delivered to some of the most vulnerable and marginalised customers and seek to improve quality of life and outcomes for all.		
Regulatory compliance	Services within SKylight contribute significantly to a range of standards, including the Tenancy Standard (meeting identified local housing needs / assisting local authorities to		

meet homelessness obligations / supporting tenants to maintain their tenancies), the **Neighbourhood & Community Standard** (engaging in local partnership arrangements and the strategic housing function / preventing and tackling anti-social behaviour) and the **Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard** (opportunities for tenants to influence and be involved / building tenant capacity / understanding and responding to the diverse needs of tenants)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. SKYlight is a Charitable Community Benefit Society (CCBS), incorporated on the 10th December 2018 and is a subsidiary of Stockport Homes Limited.
- 1.2. SKYlight has four broad key Aims stated in its governing document, and activity is structured and prioritised to deliver against these Aims:
 - Supporting people into employment, relieving poverty, relieving food poverty and developing digital skills,
 - Supporting customers in local communities and delivering support services to help people live independently,
 - Empowering communities to develop networks of support, including targeted work with people who may experience disadvantage such as people with disabilities, from BAME communities and those with complex needs,
 - Working in partnership to reduce demand on statutory services; and supporting the development of the third sector, ensuring additional resources and services are secured.
- 1.3. The Aims of SKYlight seek to address a wide range of disadvantages experienced by people living within the Borough of Stockport including:
 - Economic disadvantage, particularly for those residents who live within social housing,
 - Disadvantage which is specific to particular groups including people with disabilities, people from BAME communities and those with complex needs,
 - The difficulties people face in living independently and again recognises that customers with vulnerabilities tend to be concentrated in social and private rented sector housing.
- 1.4. The Aims also recognise the need to work in partnership with other third sector organisations in the Borough, harnessing the collective knowledge, experience and skills of organisations to secure additional resources and services, helping to reduce demand on stretched statutory services.
- 1.5. The work of SKYlight also supports many of the council's strategic priorities including the 'One Stockport Borough Plan', One Stockport Health and Well-being Strategy, Stockport Council Ageing Well Strategy, Stockport Council Early Help Strategy, One Stockport's Our Kind of Stockport – A strategy for a thriving VCFSE Sector, Stockport Council Digital Strategy, Neighbourhoods and Prevention workstream and the Greater Manchester Good Lives for All Strategy.
- 1.6. As well as being able to bid for new funding streams and tender opportunities as they arise, SKYlight is responsible for several projects which were previously delivered by Stockport Homes.

2. SKYLIGHT ACHIEVEMENTS AND PROGRESS IN 2023/24

Each area of work within SKyLight has been categorised under the charitable aim it most closely aligns with, though many projects deliver a range of benefits and contribute to the achievement of multiple outcomes.

SKyLight Aim - Supporting people into employment, relieving poverty, relieving food poverty and developing digital skills:

Motiv8

- 2.1. The Motiv8 service funded by the Big Lottery and European Social Fund, working with those most removed from the labour market to make progress in their lives and move towards education, training and employment, ended in March 2023. The service supported almost 6,000 people across GM over the life of the programme and 2,171 participants moving into employment, education, training or job searching. SKyLight was a huge part of the success of the programme, supporting nearly 1,200 of those people, of which 539 progressed into employment, education, training or job searching and over 6,000 individual outcomes were achieved in areas such as Health and Well-being, Finance and Employability and Self-confidence and Self-Development.
- 2.2. Motiv8 delivery partners worked together to sustain a level of provision whilst opportunities under the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) were explored. This resulted in funding of 500K being secured from the DWP for a small GM wide programme for 12 months targeted at people over the age of 18 with complex needs who are registered with the job centre but not currently engaged with other funded provision. The service provides wrap around support for six months to remove barriers to employment by developing a personal action plan which is unique to a person's needs. A Motiv8 Keyworker works alongside the participant to overcome their barriers and improve their prospects of accessing training or finding a job.
- 2.3. The DWP programme exceeded the target of supporting 500 participants throughout Greater Manchester, with 505 participants supported in total, of which 223 completed training, 89 secured employment and 306 commenced job-searching. Take-up in Stockport was lower than other areas of GM however 31 customers were supported in the borough with six progressing into employment & self-employment, nine moving into training and 20 began job searching. Keyworkers also supported each participant to achieve significant outcomes in relation to their Health & Wellbeing (including accessing primary health services, reducing substance misuse & alcohol), Finance and Employability (including creation of CV's, opening bank accounts and addressing debts) Self-Development & Self-Esteem (including accessing social activities and informal networks and participating in volunteering) and Tenancy goals (including bidding for, securing and sustaining a tenancy) In total over the 12 months period the Stockport residents were supported to achieve 46 Employability outcomes, 13 Financial, 33 Health and Wellbeing, 27 Self-Development & Self-Esteem and seven Tenancy outcomes.
- 2.4. Motiv8 Case study -

Ali was referred to Motiv8 by his Work Coach at the DWP, he was in his late 30s and struggling with opium use which he felt had been worsened by living in shared accommodation where drug use was common amongst other residents. Ali reported feeling unsafe in his accommodation where other residents were often engaged in negative behaviours that led to police involvement. This led to him becoming increasingly socially isolated. By the time he engaged with Motiv8 he stated that he was lacking in support and motivation, and this had led to suicidal thoughts. Ali's Keyworker supported him to access primary healthcare and seek support for his mental health, he was also encouraged to disclose his opium use. He received support to submit housing applications with Stockport Homes and other housing associations and he connected with the Motiv8 specialist resource delivered by Shelter. Ali's Keyworker was able to support him to gain stable accommodation and he is now working with Drug & Alcohol specialist services locally to reduce his drug use. He reports an improvement in his mental health and wellbeing due to finding more suitable accommodation. Now Ali is more stable he has been supported by his Keyworker to look at progression opportunities and has been referred to an ESOL course to support his learning and development and increase his English language skills ready for employment opportunities. Ali is currently job searching in the construction industry.

Apprenticeships

- 2.5. SKylight's apprenticeships programme provides people with an opportunity to work whilst obtaining an appropriate qualification over an 18 month / two-year period which will then enable the post holder to progress further in their employment. As well as increasing the number of apprenticeship opportunities within SHG it also provides opportunities for aspiring managers and leaders to gain experience of supporting and mentoring staff, with a bespoke training programme and the development of supportive networking groups for both apprentices and mentors.
- 2.6. To date 20 roles have been converted to apprenticeships in a wide range of service delivery areas including Anti-Social Behaviour, Carecall & Concierge, Customer Access, Customer Engagement, Customer Finance, Employment Support, Housing Services, Independent Living and Temporary Accommodation. A dedicated member of the team leads on apprenticeships ensuring a smooth 'on-boarding' for new starters, providing ongoing support throughout their programme as well as growing the programme across the organisation. In addition, a mentor is provided to each apprentice within their service area helping to develop aspiring managers as well as giving an apprentice peer support.
- 2.7. The level of apprenticeships offered by Stockport Homes Group varies from Level 2 (GCSE standard) to Level 7 (Masters Degree standard). Within SKylight's 20 Apprenticeships, qualifications being pursued range from Level 2 to Level 5 and in a range of disciplines including Housing & Property Management, Information Communications and Operational Management.
- 2.8. Towards the end of an apprenticeship programme apprentices are offered employment support if they are looking to apply for a permanent position at Stockport Homes Group or moving on. If a suitable position is not forthcoming within the business, or an apprentice has decided to pursue another career

pathway, opportunities within the housing sector and beyond are explored across SHG's extensive professional networks.

Furniture Recycling Project

- 2.9. The Furniture Recycling project collects donated furniture and recycles it for provision to households who are experiencing furniture poverty. The project helps alleviate financial hardship through the provision of low or no cost furniture, diverting low-income households away from high-cost credit, and thereby supporting Stockport's most vulnerable households with the essentials goods fundamental to setting up home initially and sustaining a tenancy. From an environmental perspective recycling of furniture also prevents it from ending up in landfill.
- 2.10. During 2023/24 the Furniture Recycling Project has collected furniture from 348 donor households during 23/24, and from 178 void properties, an increase of 188 on the previous year. The increase is a result of the team advertising for donations through new avenues including local magazines in more affluent areas of the borough, and a significant increase in the promotion of the service through social media platforms. The team supported 321 households in need with supplying furniture, this included supplying 294 white goods, 134 sofas, 178 wardrobes and drawers. A total of 42.1 tonnes was diverted away from landfill. To meet the continued high demand for the service the team has prioritised customers leaving Temporary Accommodation or customers that have been homeless.
- 2.11. Additional funding of £31,000 for the service was secured from the Household Support Fund held by Stockport Council. This provided an additional 59 beds and mattresses and 93 white goods to 91 households between September and December 2023. An additional amount of funding (£5,940) has been allocated at the end of the financial year, which will be utilised to support more households in 2024/25.
- 2.12. The furniture warehouse in Hazel Grove which opened in October 2022 continues to grow, with a constant stream of good quality furniture held for a short time, ensuring items are collected and available to customers quickly, with many items often taken within days of being donated. As well as providing much needed, additional storage space and enabling the service to grow and develop as detailed within the Furniture Business Plan, the premises also offers customers the opportunity to visit and select their own items, offering more dignity and choice. A wide range of additional and smaller items are also sold from the warehouse, creating additional income for the service, with £20,475 of additional income created from such this year.
- 2.13. The service continues to grow in reputation, receiving positive feedback from both those receiving the service and those donating to it. Many customers have said that without support from the Furniture Recycling Project they would have looked at alternative ways to source furniture such as securing a loan or a pay monthly plan at a high cost.

Your Local Pantry

- 2.14. Your Local Pantry (YLP) is a network of community food stores set up to help reduce grocery costs for Stockport residents who are struggling financially. Pantry members pay a weekly £4.50 membership fee, which entitles them to a

weekly shop of up to ten items often to an equivalent value of £21¹. Community volunteers work alongside the staff team to manage the day-to-day running of each Pantry. This includes taking deliveries and storing and rotating stock, completing opening and closing checks and supporting members with their weekly shop.

- 2.15. Strong links are in place with the Third Sector, through the food redistributor Fareshare, and a strong relationship with the charity Church Action on Poverty (CAP) who lead the national franchising scheme. YLP is also the preferred referral route for residents contacting Stockport Council's Cost of Living helpline, with four-week pantry memberships funded by the service where appropriate. Supplies from Fareshare are supplemented by weekly donations from a range of stores including ASDA, Aldi, Morrison's and the Co-op.
- 2.16. At the end of March 2024, membership stood at 288 members across the five pantries, this includes 67 new members referred via the Stockport Council Cost of Living helpline. Pantry membership fluctuates across the year as new members join and existing members end their membership. A total of 8,658 pantry visits were made by members during the year which equates to an estimated value of £181,818 based on the £21 average value shop.
- 2.17. YLP generated £64,827 of social value as a result of volunteering alone with 4,116 hours of volunteer time committed². During the last 12 months, three new volunteers have been recruited and supported through a comprehensive induction programme, including training in manual handling and Food Hygiene Level 2. One pantry volunteer has progressed into paid employment this year. A range of cost of living & health wrap around support and advice services have been showcased during the year including Smart Works (a women's styling service for interview clothes), the local public health team, employment support, energy advice, money advice, and cancer awareness. One outcome from this was the Money Advice Team providing advice and guidance to a member who was struggling with their finances and not paying rent, preventing possession action.
- 2.18. Feedback from customers continues to convey the vital role YLP plays in supporting both financially and in tackling social isolation:
"The pantry is a Godsend in these times." Brinnington Pantry Member
"I need the saving I make to survive." Brinnington Pantry Member
"I really do appreciate the pantry; it helps me so much and ensures that I can stock up on my weekly food shop." Mottram Street Pantry member.
"The pantry is a much-needed resource, and we would struggle without it." Anonymous
"Great team, very supportive. We couldn't do without you." Anonymous
"Base for meeting people and having a chat, getting ideas from other people and enjoying the company as I live on my own." Mottram Street Pantry member.

¹ Estimated value by Church Action on Poverty

² Based on cost of a Pantry Operations Officers salary plus on costs

“Love the pantry, it has helped me to stretch my state pension as I don’t have a private pension to use.” Bridgehall Pantry Member

“Pantry Number 5 has been a God send to me. There is always healthy food and a wide range of tin food which you can always make a meal. The ladies who run it are always friendly and sometimes they are the only people I speak to in a week.” Bridgehall Pantry Member.

- 2.19. During the year, YLP have received £26,364 in grants and financial donations, with £20,000 from Stockport Council’s Household Support Fund to increase access to low-cost food as part of supporting residents with the cost-of-living crisis. The remaining amount has been small grants to purchase additional food stock and upgrade fridges and freezers.
- 2.20. SKyLight designed and developed the YLP model and continue to hold the Intellectual Property rights allowing Church Action on Poverty (CAP) to franchise the model. The success of the model is demonstrated by the opening of the 116th YLP store in the UK. Over this year 11,575 members have been supported with 72,540 visits made at pantry stores across the UK.

SKyLight Aim - Supporting customers in local communities and delivering support services to help people live independently:

Youth Provision

- 2.21. SKyLight provides a wide variety of youth activities during the year, such as holiday clubs during the school holidays and mental resilience programmes delivered in schools during term time. The team have also assisted with the delivery of programmes linked to the Government funded Holiday Activities Fund (HAF). Holiday Clubs support young people suffering from holiday hunger and those with social, emotional, and mental health needs through a programme of enriching activities.
- 2.22. SKyLight continues to focus its Holiday Club offer on secondary school aged children, a key gap in the borough, with delivery over five school holidays (49 places provided in Easter, 55 in Whit, 221 places in Summer, 68 places in October 2023 and 85 places in February 2024). Delivering a total of 478 interventions for young people aged 11-17 identified as vulnerable under the HAF eligibility criteria.
- 2.23. A range of enrichment activities and trips were provided each day, alongside healthy meals and snacks. A food pack was also provided to the young people to take home after each session. The team collaborated with a broad range of external organisations and facilitators, to deliver specialist workshops, including a photography masterclass, DJing sessions, Circus Skills, healthy meal preparation and cooking, clothes upcycling, and Afro-Brazilian drumming. Trips were organised to take the young people rock-climbing, axe-throwing and high-rope adventure centres, as well as to educational spaces such as Manchester Museum and the National Football Museum.
- 2.24. In addition, this year SKyLight successfully bid for £5,000 from Stockport Council’s Town of Culture initiative and has delivered the Stockport Young Makers Arts Programme, an after-school Arts Club for young people who have accessed mental health services but have not engaged with other SKyLight youth projects. Many of the referrals came from the SHINE mental health

programme delivered by Beacon Counselling. The Young Makers programme engaged 11 young people aged 13-18, over nine weeks delivering a range of creative workshops, including screen-printing, ceramics, woodwork, and collage.

- 2.25. Feedback indicated that 87% of parents and carers felt that the programme provided young people with an opportunity to meet new people and improve their emotional well-being. 100% felt the programme provided an opportunity for them to learn new skills. The work produced was included in the Town of Culture Showcase in March.

Greater Manchester Housing First (GMHF)

- 2.26. SKYlight worked with a range of GM partners to secure the GM Housing First contract which began in April 2019. Housing First is a relatively new approach to meeting housing need and homelessness in the UK and can be more commonly found in Europe, the US and Canada.
- 2.27. It marks a move away from a traditional staircase approach³ to homelessness and is instead based upon the premise that housing is the priority requirement that must be met, which then provides a stable base from which recovery and progress can be made. It is not suitable for everyone and can therefore only be part of a range of offers, but does have a strong, and growing, evidence base of success. The success of Housing First is based on access to a home, dedicated, tenacious support, workers with small caseloads who have the time and energy to dedicate to their cases and wider stakeholder engagement. All cases supported by the service are characterised by a range of complex needs including entrenched rough sleeping, offending behaviour, substance misuse and mental and physical health issues resulting in chaotic and challenging behaviours.
- 2.28. The GM Housing First service delivered by SKYlight is currently supporting 13 customers, nine men and four women. Intensive levels, of often daily support, have been provided to ensure a smooth transition into accommodation, with ongoing support thereafter around sustaining tenancies, anchoring into local communities and achieving personal aspirations and goals.
- 2.29. During 2023/24 customers have been supported to achieve a wide range of outcomes including addressing physical and mental health needs, developing daily living skills, furnishing and decorating new homes, volunteering in their local communities, and successfully engaging with substance misuse services and primary health services. Many are being supported to access support from external partners around mental health and substance misuse and one positive outcome of this multidisciplinary approach has seen a customer access a longer-term permanent housing pathway and subsequently graduate from the Housing First initiative.

³ A staircase approach refers to more traditional approaches to housing and supporting homeless people whereby a person is moved to, (sometimes several different types), of temporary accommodation and having to demonstrate they are 'tenancy ready' before moving into a permanent home

- 2.30. During the last 12 months, six customers have either graduated from the Housing First programme or left due to other reasons (three customers graduated to successful future pathways, one customer passed away, one customer remained on the programme but transferred to the Manchester zone and one customer was given a long custodial sentence and a decision was taken to close the case to GMHF after months of non-engagement prior to this).
- 2.31. This year, the GMHF officers have focused much attention on peer support, anchoring within communities, involvement in Co-Production activities across the whole GMCA programme, and even designing and developing a successful community event open to GMHF customers across all 4 zones “Mix with Music”.
- 2.32. The five week “Mix with Music” event provided an opportunity for customers to engage with informal support and activities, meet new friends, socialise over lunch, and enjoy a host of hobbies and activities all centred around music, culminating in the group recording and producing their own track. A variety of speakers also attended the sessions providing a range of information including money advice, support with energy efficiency and bills, benefits and employment and community groups. Most notably one of the Housing First customers also spoke candidly about his issues with addiction, offending, homelessness, relationships and health, which was very well received by attendees.
- 2.33. Further funding has not been identified, though this continues to be explored, and therefore exit planning will be undertaken during the course of the next 12 months to ensure successful graduation for customers and the sourcing of appropriate pathways for those still requiring support to sustain tenancies.

Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme

- 2.34. Established in April 2022, The Rough Sleeper Accommodation Project (RSAP) provides capital funds to purchase & renovate one-bedroom, self-contained properties. Properties were purchased directly from the open market to provide fixed term tenancies to individuals with a history of entrenched rough sleeping. In addition, 10 one-bedroom properties have also been allocated from Stockport Homes existing portfolio and specifically assigned to the RSAP programme. Integral to the success of the programme are the dedicated project officers providing person centred, intensive support which commences prior to a customer being allocated a property.
- 2.35. Of the 15 customers currently engaged on the project, 12 are sustaining their tenancies and proactively engaging with support. These 12 customers are responding to structured support addressing a range of challenges which would otherwise put their tenancy at risk including substance and or/ alcohol use, poor mental and physical wellbeing and engaging in anti-social behaviour. In relation to the remaining three customers, the officer is working intensely to engage these individuals and coordinate a network of professionals and services to sustain their tenancies and deliver positive outcomes.
- 2.36. RSAP Case Study

Lenny had an extensive history of street homelessness and short periods in Temporary Accommodation. Additionally, he had served numerous custodial

sentences attributed to substance and alcohol misuse. He struggled to sustain a tenancy independently and was identified as a suitable applicant for an RSAP property in August 2022.

Prior to Lenny moving into the property, his Officer assisted him to obtain furniture and white goods with a 'personalisation fund' which is part of the RSAP offer. This enabled Lenny to secure items that would ensure the property felt like a home from the moment he moved in. Budgeting is essential for sustained success and the Officer supported Lenny to set up utilities and ensure rent payments would be consistently paid.

Lenny's Officer used a person-centred approach to develop a bespoke action plan to address factors that had previously resulted in tenancies failing. Ensuring Lenny engaged with probation, a substance misuse worker, and their GP was critical in ensuring tenancy sustainment and improved wellbeing.

Lenny also had multiple physical health issues that were poorly managed. Lenny was supported to register with a GP and is now attending regular medical appointments and receiving appropriate medication to better manage health conditions.

Since securing a tenancy and receiving wraparound support from the project, Lenny's substance misuse has reduced greatly, and he is now abstinent from alcohol. Testament to the effective working relationship nurtured between Lenny and his Officer, engagement has remained consistent, and Lenny feels confident to attend Cornerstone independently in addition to the frequent home visits provided by the project.

SKYlight Aim - Empowering communities to develop networks of support, including targeted work with people who may experience disadvantage such as people with disabilities, from BAME communities and those with complex needs:

Mental Toughness

- 2.37. SKYlight provides Mental Toughness sessions across primary, secondary schools, Pupil Referral Units (PRS) and a college in Stockport to improve young people's attendance, confidence, resilience and overall wellbeing. It is delivered to young people who may be lacking in confidence or find themselves struggling in classes of 30 or more children. The programme is delivered to small groups or on a one-to-one basis. The young people are referred to the programme by the school. The service is highly valued by schools as many local schools do not have a wellbeing budget to support young people's mental health.
- 2.38. During 2023/24, the Mental Toughness programme has been delivered in six different schools to 71 different young people. This has been supported by an additional 31 one to one sessions for young people requiring a more bespoke person-centred approach. Mental Toughness has been delivered in one primary school, three secondary schools, two Pupil Referral Units (PRU) and one Higher Education (HE) college. Programme delivery has included a combination of group sessions which focused on confidence and resilience and team building activities, as well as one-to-one sessions which focused on developing emotional awareness and building emotional coping strategies.

Rough Sleeper Initiative

- 2.39. The core of the Rough Sleeper service is funded from a joint Greater Manchester Combined Authority ('GMCA') bid which provides a Rough Sleeper Outreach Worker and Rough Sleeping Navigator, employed directly by SKylight. Specialist support for mental health and substance misuse is also provided through the GMCA bid, with a part-time Dual Diagnosis Worker and part-time Psychologist available through the Greater Manchester Mental Health team.
- 2.40. The Rough Sleeper Outreach Worker is primarily focussed on responding to reports of rough sleeping and engaging with people. The Rough Sleeping Navigator role supports a small case load of rough sleepers to access services and supports transition off the streets and into accommodation. The Dual Diagnosis Worker and Psychologist work directly with people referred by RSI workers and also those referred by Temporary Accommodation and Housing Options teams. They are able to assess and engage individuals and also provide a referral pathway into Stockport services.
- 2.41. There has been a rise in rough sleeping on a local, sub-regional and national scale, with an estimated 19 people rough sleeping in Stockport at the end of 2023/24, double the average over the past three years. This is despite intensive work by the two dedicated Skylight staff providing outreach support and engaging with street homeless people every day.
- 2.42. Responding to referrals from partner agencies and the public and visiting known rough sleeping locations, the workers usually start at around 7am to ensure they find people while bedded down. Co-location at the Wellspring Day Centre several days a week and SHG's Temporary Accommodation schemes also helps build relationships with those who are rough sleeping, at risk of doing so or may be begging on a regular basis and have support needs. During 2023/24, there were 670 reports of rough sleepers, with 246 resulting in a confirmed rough sleeping site. Keeping the numbers down to 19 has proved an exceptional challenge due to the acute lack of affordable accommodation, but as well as the established 'A Bed Every Night' scheme that provide ten beds at any one time, an additional 15 flats have been established through the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme and five secured through additional funding for those with an offending history.
- 2.43. Partnership work has been key to minimising the problem, with a strong focus on linking people with accommodation when leaving prison and hospital, two of the main causes of rough sleeping. Fortnightly meetings with key statutory and third sector services ensure all rough sleepers have a dedicated rehousing and support plan, at the very least maintaining contact and making welfare checks.

Mental Health & Housing Support Worker (MHHSW)

- 2.44. There is a strong correlation between mental ill-health and homelessness, often accompanied by other issues such as substance abuse and a history of trauma. To help address this matter, in January 2021 SHG and the Clinical Commission Group (CCG) jointly funded a dedicated a Mental Health and Housing Support Worker for an initial two-year period. While the joint funding has ended, SHG have continued the post due to the positive outcomes

achieved. Delivered through SKYlight and closely aligned with other related areas of work such as Housing First and the Rough Sleeping Initiative, this role focusses on assisting people with serious mental ill-health to live independently and access support. It aims to:

- Provide individual support to people with significant mental health issues in hospital and needing help transitioning home/accessing accommodation
- Work with people at risk of homelessness or hospital admission due to significant mental health issues
- Provide specialised advice and support to staff around mental health cases
- Help navigate mental health services and ensure correct assessments and referrals

- 2.45. The Mental Health and Housing Support worker supported a total of 198 people over 2023/24. This ranged from people experiencing depression and anxiety, through to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Serious Mental Illness. The specialist worker, with an extensive background working in mental health, ensures people can access the appropriate services as well as providing direct support and acting as a point of expertise for other colleagues within SHG. Often this involves co-ordinating support plans drawing in a range of services, for example with one customer aligning substance misuse, domestic abuse, and mental health support into one cohesive intervention to help sustain a temporary accommodation placement after a long period of homelessness.
- 2.46. With people seeking rehousing with increasingly complex needs, this role both improves outcomes for customers and supports SHG in preventing tenancy failure. It also helps enable wider 'One Stockport' objectives around improving mental health and wellbeing within the Borough and reducing the need to access services in crisis situations.

Domestic Abuse Case Worker

- 2.47. The Domestic Abuse Case Officer (DACO) provides support to people in Stockport who are experiencing Domestic Abuse. The post is funded from homelessness monies and provides advice and support, managing risk on a daily basis and making referrals to a range of services including GMP, Stockport Without Abuse, Adult Social Care, Stockport Family and Health. The DACO also attends all Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) which deal with high-risk domestic abuse cases and participates in the multi-agency Domestic Abuse Operational Group. The aim is to reduce harm as well as reducing the risk of homelessness by supporting people to harm remain in the family home where safe and appropriate to do so or secure alternative accommodation.
- 2.48. The DACO role has been instrumental in working towards Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation during 2023/24, forming part of a new dedicated team working alongside two specialist Housing Options Officers. As well as providing direct support to 293 households, they have raised awareness through presentations at team meetings and assisted with a wholesale review of customer and staff policies and procedures. Domestic abuse is addressed

as a partnership within the Borough, with the DACO co-located with Stockport Without Abuse on a regular basis and representing SHG at the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) meetings to discuss high risk cases.

- 2.49. Working with people to either stay safely in their homes or explore alternative emergency or long-term housing solutions, the DACO develops a bespoke plan for customers focussed on their needs, wishes and aspirations. They also work with partner agencies to hold perpetrators to account, giving evidence in one case that resulted in a violent partner being convicted and receiving a significant prison sentence. Focus groups of partner agencies during the DAHA process demonstrated the value placed upon the role by both statutory services and third sector agencies supporting victims/survivors.

Exploitation Protection Officer

- 2.50. SKylight employs an Exploitation Protection Officer to tackle the growing problem of exploitation and “cuckooing” of vulnerable people. The Officer covers the whole of the borough and all tenures with a key objective to prevent exploitation occurring and help those who have become the victims of cuckooing remain safe. Cuckooing is where another person takes over a property that is not their own, usually by taking advantage of vulnerable people or those who have complex needs such as mental health problems or substance misuse issues. The perpetrator will then use the property for illegal purposes such as growing cannabis farms, storing drugs or weapons and to breed dogs.
- 2.51. Customers are provided with dedicated support to help them access services including drug and alcohol support and to implement partial closure orders which help victims remain in their home and near their support network, whilst prohibiting the perpetrator from being at the property. The Officer also works proactively with GMP and other agencies to try and identify those most at risk of being cuckooed before the exploitation takes place. During the course of the year, 136 cases have been referred with 72 households accepting support and remaining in their properties, 32 cases were investigated but found to not involve exploitation and 24 households refused support. As well as supporting those experiencing exploitation to sustain their tenancies, the role also assists in the prevention of homelessness and the loss of rental income through void costs.
- 2.52. The service has been recognised nationally with presentations delivered at Leeds University School of Law to a wide range of professionals working in the sector and to six police forces across GM. The team have also won a Problem Oriented Policing (POP) award for its work supporting vulnerable people.
- 2.53. Case Study

A referral was received from GMP for a vulnerable tenant living in a high-rise property, who was believed to have had his property taken over but did not wish to make an official complaint to the police.

The Exploitation Protection Officer (EPO) investigated and found that a known, violent male had taken over the tenant’s property and would make the tenant leave when his girlfriend came to stay, which resulted in the tenant sleeping in the bin chute of the building as he had nowhere else to go. The male had gym equipment in the property and had used a dumbbell to hit the tenant over the

head, resulting in a hospital stay and multiple stitches. The male force fed the remnants of ashtrays to the tenant purely for his entertainment. The male would punch, kick, spit and denied the tenant alcohol and food.

The EPO and GMP conducted a joint visit to the property, the perpetrator was also present and tried to convince Officers that he was the tenant's career and was helping him with his alcohol addiction, by only giving him small amounts of money to be able to buy the alcohol he needs. The EPO noted that it was clear the tenant was very distressed and scared of the male. The EPO arranged to meet the tenant at Cornerstone where the tenant gave a full account of what was happening to him. He also disclosed he was waiting for an appointment to go to Rehab where he felt he would be free.

The EPO contacted all support services that the tenant was involved in and provided supporting information for his Rehab placement. Keeping in contact with the tenant was difficult as the perpetrator was always present and creative ways were utilised to arrange appointments. Although initially the tenant did not want to leave the property, due to the risk from the perpetrator, advice and support was provided to explore alternative housing options.

Alternative accommodation was secured and a plan put in place to safely move the tenant with the EPO providing practical and emotional support throughout. The EPO and GMP then visited the perpetrator and advised him to leave the property immediately. A Community Protection Notice was served by the EPO which stated he was not allowed to return to the block and he was removed by GMP. The tenant is happy and thriving in his new home and has managed to self-detox from alcohol.

Skylight Partnerships Manager

- 2.54. SKylight Partnerships Manager continues to support the Council in the delivery of support to Refugee and Migrant households in the borough. The initial priority remains the support of Ukrainian households who have been 'hosted' under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme for a period of six months. With no end in sight following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in March 2022, the Homes for Ukraine scheme has now entered its second year and has continued to be funded by DLUHC (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities) however visa rights for new arrivals have now been reduced from 36 to 18 months, with many of the visas of earlier arrivals due to expire in Spring 2025. In the longer-term, this role will focus on wider work with ethnic minority communities, with work undertaken recently to improve access to the Asian Heritage Centre for older people in the Heatons.
- 2.55. During 2023/24, 36 new households consisting of 57 people arrived and were resettled into hosting arrangements within the borough. Extended hosting arrangements have been agreed for 45 households consisting of 102 people. 31 households consisting of 75 people were supported to move to private sector accommodation within the borough when their existing hosting arrangements came to an end. 16 households consisting of 30 people that lived in safer areas of the Ukraine decided to return. Unfortunately, hosting arrangements for 5 households consisting of 11 people broke down and rematching arrangements had to be secured quickly in order to avoid

homelessness presentations. 62 households consisting of 106 people continue to be supported by SKylight and the Council's Migrant Communities team.

- 2.56. Twice weekly drop-ins are held at Cornerstone for host sponsors and Ukrainian households providing housing advice and on-going resettlement support. Work has also been undertaken to support Ukrainian households into employment, improving their economic situation and thereby increasing the range of housing options which are affordable. This has included a bespoke employment event with local employers.
- 2.57. SKylight has also worked with the council to relaunch and relocate the Asian Heritage Centre, originally established in 1996 for older South Asian elders. The number of participants to the Centre had been reducing and the group also had issues with the venue it was utilising. Following consultation with members of the group, SKylight offered the use of the communal spaces at Queens Gardens sheltered scheme. Members also agreed they would like to widen participation from all sections of the community and have renamed it as the 'Cultures Together' group to promote wider inclusion. A wider range of partners have been invited to be involved with the group including planned health awareness sessions and a Community Arts programme.

SKylight Aim - Working in partnership to reduce demand on statutory services; and supporting the development of the third sector, ensuring additional resources and services are secured

Supporting the development of the Third Sector

- 2.58. SKylight continues to work closely with Sector 3⁴ and Stockport Council to develop a more consistent joined up voice of the Third Sector. SKylight supports a wide variety of third sector organisations and civil society groups to design and create community projects. The SKylight Funding Officer supports community groups to identify and access a range of grant funding to maximise local opportunities to the Voluntary, Community, Faith, and Social Enterprise Sector (VCFSE) to ensure a vibrant third sector community.
- 2.59. The SKylight Funding Officer provides detailed funding searches using a bespoke grant matrix to refine and define the grant information and advice for each community organisation. This service can also progress into a bespoke project consultation from the Funding Officer which can be provided prior to any grant application being developed and submitted.
- 2.60. SKylight continues to work closely with Sector 3 to deliver events which bring civil society groups together with funders directly, with 160 community groups benefitting from events this year. SKylight's annual 'Funding the Future' conference was held in September with 60 community groups brought together with local and national funders. This event also included Greater Manchester Council for Voluntary Organisation (GMCVO) and Sector3 and raised awareness of new grant programmes including the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. SKylight also facilitated smaller 'Meet the Funder' coffee table events for 15 community groups, ensuring each group had the opportunity to ask specific

⁴ Sector 3 is a network of third sector organisations set up in Stockport in 2017 to improve the resilience and sustainability of sector organisations by bringing them together to share resources, expertise and voice.

questions of the funder. These are aimed at smaller community groups who are new to grant funding or those groups looking to branch out into new areas of funding. Manchester Airport, ASDA, TESCO, and Forever Manchester worked with Skylight to deliver funding sessions this year. Local Intelligence meetings were held with Stockport Council, Sector3, SKylight Community Fund and the National Lottery Community Fund which resulted in positive outcomes and local groups getting the most appropriate support from the most relevant organisation.

2.61. Working directly with local third sector groups, SKylight has contributed to securing £636,137 of grant income into the borough in 2023/24. SKylight supports over 300 civil society groups each year through the 'LIFE' model (Lead, Influence, Follow, Exit). LIFE is the process by which support is provided at a variety of different levels to allow groups access to help and advice when required leading to autonomy once the community group has learned to grow and develop. Support given under LIFE can range from:

- Funding searches and recommendations for applications
- Guided support to develop a funding bid in detail.
- Provision of statistical data
- Monitoring and supporting the submission of grant applications as a 'critical friend'

2.62. Highlights during 2023/24 include:

- Make A Difference and Ongoing Women's Local Support (OWLS) supported to access almost £40,000 of consultancy support and core cost grant funding for unincorporated organisations to transition into Charitable Incorporated Organisations, this complex step will be transformational as it will open a wider range of grant funding, tenders and commissioning opportunities for the group
- £254,913 National Lottery Reaching Communities grant awarded to the RTime partnership of Stockport Council and SKylight led by Active Stockport CIC (Life Leisure) to deliver a three-year programme of youth work
- £36,000 grant from Greater Manchester Environment Fund to develop a new Community Interest Company "Seeding the Change". This fund has since improved greenspaces in Shaw Heath and develop a community allotment plot on Webb Lane Allotments
- £242,235 National Lottery Reaching Communities grant provided to Starting Point over three years to recruit and train 250 new digital champions and support Stockport Councils 'Digiknow' project

2.63. The Skylight Funding Office has a particular focus on identifying and nurturing community groups to enable them to grow into a sustainable, incorporated legal entities to maximise opportunities for growth and development. This focus addresses the challenges inherent in continuous reliability on short-term grants and funding identified by the National Council for Voluntary Organisation (NCVO). By utilising the LIFE model, future pathways are identified and

explored to ensure a successful third sector is sustained which continues to develop and evolve.

SKylight Community Fund

- 2.64. The SKylight Community Fund provides awards of up to £2,000 to constituted community groups, non-profit organisations, small charities and social enterprise for projects and activities which improve the neighbourhoods where SHG manage properties and make a genuine difference to the lives of customers and the wider community. In order to be awarded funding, applicants must demonstrate how funding would benefit Stockport Homes' customers or communities. The panel, comprising local residents, evaluate applications and make decisions on how the fund is spent with an annual budget of £50K available.
- 2.65. The Fund's objectives support groups and projects which meet one of the following six designated categories:
- Community Spirit
 - Digital Inclusion
 - Employment & Skills
 - Health & Well-being
 - Older People
 - Younger People
- 2.66. During 2023/24, 54 applications totalling £85,159 were made to the Fund, a significant increase on the 44 applications totalling £64,609 received in 2022/23. A number of groups applying exceeded the £2,000 limit which has contributed to the increase in the total requested throughout the year. The Customer Panel awarded the full budget of £50k to 33 groups. 61% of all eligible applications secured funding with an average award of £1,477. 21 applications weren't eligible for a variety of reasons, including insufficient or inaccurate cost information being provided, failure to provide supporting documentation, the project being based outside of Stockport and the group already receiving funding in the last 12 months.
- 2.67. Funding has been awarded to a wide range of projects including support to first time mothers and their families, youth projects, Age Well Yoga, support to care experienced young people, digital inclusion, Life Skills, a volunteer programme for women experiencing Domestic Abuse, mental well-being football and a Community Skills Exchange programme led by the Refugee Community Togetherness Group. Most projects have multiple benefits, with the majority of successful applications supporting health and wellbeing.
- 2.68. *Case Study - BOOST Wellbeing CIC: 'Get Onside Mental Wellbeing Football'*
BOOST provide safe social spaces for people to get active, connect with others, build skills, and improve mental wellbeing. When applying for the SKylight Community Fund, BOOST set out their belief that sport, and football in particular, can help to build social connections essential for wellbeing.
In April 2023, the Skylight Community Fund awarded BOOST £1,750 to deliver their 'Get Onside' mental wellbeing football classes at Stockport Sports Village

in Woodley. The fund contributed to the cost of the pitch and equipment and was delivered in partnership with Stockport Town Football Club and Life Leisure.

Starting with six residents, the group has since welcomed 60 residents who have benefitted from the free wellbeing sessions and supports an average of 20 people per session. Sessions are mixed in gender and age, with players ranging from 16 to 67 years old. The sessions have also supported those in primary and secondary care, as well as people with physical disabilities and additional needs.

BOOST have received excellent feedback from participants, highlighting the importance of the sessions in not just building physical wellbeing, but social inclusion and self-esteem:

'It makes me feel better after stressful days at work. I do feel better after physical exercise and meeting up with other participants[...] I enjoy the banter, support and encouragement'

'It is a fantastic way to meet new people, have fun and keep fit. The games are not competitive, everyone encourages each other and is very friendly. I forward to it every week and it is a great way to put aside any niggles that life throws my way for an hour'

Offender Engagement Work

- 2.69. The Offender Engagement Officer (OEO) delivers direct and practical support to offenders in housing need. Delivered through SKylight, it is part of the organisation's commitment to engaging with the most excluded in the Borough who struggle to maximise their full potential. In addition, the OEO delivers the 'Accommodation for Ex-Offenders Scheme' (AFEO) and the 'Community Accommodation Scheme' (CAS-3) within Stockport. The former supports ex-offenders at risk of rough sleeping into private rented accommodation and the latter provides interim housing for up to 84 days for people leaving custody and those moving on from Approved Premises who would otherwise face homelessness, supported by the OEO.
- 2.70. The OEO continues to work closely with the National Probation Service (NPS) and Integrated Offender Management (IOM) Service to provide seamless support to offenders, many of whom have complex backgrounds and needs and often feel unable to access mainstream provision. During 2023/24 18 individuals have been supported under the AFEO scheme into private rented accommodation, exceeding the target set of 15.
- 2.71. Seven units are utilised to deliver the CAS-3 scheme with the following outcomes achieved:
- 19 people successfully re-housed into their own private tenancies
 - 13 people supported to find and maintain employment
 - 3 people have commenced training courses
- 2.72. Quote from customer:
- "I just wanted to say how much help I got from Az. He helped me so much, when life circumstances weren't too good. I would like to thank you for all your

hard work you did to help me stand in my feet and progress with my life. Az has done so much for me and I will be thanking him forever because he saved my life from being homeless. I can't express how much grateful I am."

Ageing in Place Pathfinder (AIPP)

- 2.73. SKYlight has undertaken extensive work with the GM Ageing Hub to identify potential opportunities to work together and secure external funding. This has resulted in 40K of funding being secured for SKYlight from the Dunhill Foundation to work alongside the GM Ageing Hub and Manchester University on a two-year research project around age friendly housing and supporting ageing in place. A successful bid was also submitted to the Worwin Foundation for £2.5m across GM for the delivery of an Ageing in Place Pathfinder Project (AIPP) with SKYlight receiving 200K over three years. The AIPP is a GM wide project comprising of nine projects testing new ways of creating neighbourhoods that support older people to age well, reduce loneliness and improve quality of life with older people placed at the heart of decision-making.
- 2.74. Both projects will focus on the Brinnington area where there is a high concentration of older people but limited specialist accommodation and where life expectancy and healthy life expectancy is much lower than the borough average. Due to the complementary nature of both projects staff will joint work where possible to maximise resources and ensure activities are aligned and complementary. The project is led by a Steering Group of residents within the local area and key partners.
- 2.75. During 2023/24 the Steering Group developed an Action Plan centred around four priority domains of:
 - Outdoor Space & Buildings
 - Social Participation
 - Respect & Social Inclusion
 - Community Support & Health
- 2.76. A wide range of events and initiatives have then been developed within these themes including social events associated with International Older Persons Day, Halloween, Christmas, St Patricks Day and Easter. Health initiatives focussed on Yoga, healthy eating and cooking, securing a local allotment and developing a Community Garden. Several 'Warm Spaces' have been facilitated and a local Community Art Group supported. Of particular note is the progress the AIPP has made in engaging residents from local care homes, a community of older people who are often forgotten and excluded. This approach has included events being held within the Care Homes themselves as well as residents being supported to access the wider activities and events offered by the Pathfinder.
- 2.77. The Pathfinder has also secured £20k of funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to develop the 'Brinnington Circle' which will offer one access point for older residents to access a wide range of events and activities both locally and across GM.
- 2.78. *Case Study*

Alan attended one of the weekly pop-ups delivered by the Pathfinder and disclosed that he was struggling financially, getting into debt and relying on a foodbank. Referrals were made to the Money Advice Team and Stockport Council's Support Fund for practical support. Alan also disclosed he felt socially isolated and Officers discussed with him the Pathfinder and the opportunities it offered. He was encouraged to join the AIPP Steering Group to get involved and connect with other local residents and also provided with information about the range of activities on offer.

Alan then had a period of illness but support continued through the AIPP with four weeks of free meals organised through a local voluntary organisation. Following Alan's recovery he started engaging with the Steering Group and other activities and has made some friends. Alan recently expressed how grateful he was for the support that the AIPP team had provided him and the difference it has made to his life.

Preventative Services

- 2.79. SKylight is a partner in The Prevention Alliance (TPA) along with Age UK Stockport, Jigsaw Support, Nacro and Talk Listen Change. The TPA deliver early help and prevention support to improve the wellbeing of residents in Stockport.
- 2.80. The TPA are funded by Adult Social Care at Stockport Council to deliver the Boroughwide Contract from April 2022 to March 2027, with potential for a two-year extension up to March 2029. The Boroughwide contract includes the delivery of Stockport Support Hub and Your Support. Stockport Support Hub is a single point of access for people and professionals looking for support in Stockport. Through extensive local knowledge and partnership working, the Hub help people reach the right support at the right time and prevent escalation into statutory services.
- 2.81. Your Support have dedicated Key Workers who provide one to one support to help people who are feeling overwhelmed. Through person-led support people are encouraged to improve their health and wellbeing addressing issues such as housing, finances, digital skills, and confidence to enable them to live a full and independent life. Your Support also work in partnership and co-ordinate a multi-agency approach when needed.
- 2.82. During 2023/24, Stockport Support Hub received 7148 referrals. This is an increase of 1240 referrals compared to the previous year. The Hub triages every referral and provide information and advice, and signpost or refer people directly to the most appropriate support. The Hub provided advice on 4987 occasions to 3424 individuals and issued 1504 foodbank vouchers.
- 2.83. Your Support received 1263 referrals, 171 fewer than in 2022/23. Changes to the person's wellbeing are measured whilst they are working with Your Support. 96.9% of people showed an improvement to their wellbeing at case closure compared to 92.6% in 2022/23. Your Support also capture where people have made some progress but may not have fully achieved their goal. 97.2% of all goals were either partially or fully achieved, demonstrating that overall people are making positive progress.
- 2.84. Weekly BSL Interpreter support sessions are delivered for the Deaf Community at Cornerstone with regular access to support services, advocacy to break

down barriers in accessing other services and the promotion of digital skills. The TPA delivered 364 BSL support sessions during the year and developed a suite of BSL videos hosted on the Stockport Support website to improve accessibility.

- 2.85. The TPA are key partners in DigiKnow, Stockport's Digital Inclusion Alliance to help shape, support and promote digital inclusion in Stockport. The TPA delivered 1286 digital support sessions to help people improve their digital skills and access in 2023/24.

2.86. *Case Study - Stockport Support Hub*

Ann's son contacted Stockport Support Hub, he was concerned about his elderly mum. Ann is blind and has carers to help with daily living.

Ann's boiler wasn't working, she had no hot water or heating in her home. Ann was using an electric heater which was expensive to use and only warmed one room. Ann was unable to afford a new boiler.

The Key Worker at Stockport Support Hub identified that Ann was eligible for help through the Household Support Fund and immediately referred Ann to partners at Home Support to access the fund.

Home Support contacted Ann the next day and arranged for a gas engineer to visit her. A new boiler was fitted within two days and Ann's now has a warm and comfortable home which will improve her health and wellbeing.

2.87. *Case Study - Your Support*

Charlie was referred to Your Support by the Sensory Loss Team. Charlie is registered blind and required support with benefits.

Charlie explained that he lives with his father and teenage son. His father was currently in hospital for cancer treatment.

Until his cancer diagnosis, Charlie's father had been working full time and had supported his son and grandson financially. Charlie was receiving Personal Independence Payments and was not in receipt of Universal Credit. The family were facing financial hardship as they were all surviving on Charlie's PIP payments. The Key Worker decided to take a whole family approach.

Charlie's Key Worker recognised that due to his sight loss he would need longer term support and made a referral to Adult Social Care. His Key Worker supported him to make a claim for Universal Credit and showed his son how to manage his claim online until his capability for work had been assessed. The Key Worker supported Charlie to have his Child Benefit reinstated - it had stopped as he hadn't informed them his son was at college. He received a back payment for over 12 months of Child Benefit. Charlie's Key Worker helped his son to apply for Carer's Allowance and his father's Personal Independence Payments under the special rules.

Not long after this, Charlie's father sadly passed away. Understandably this was a very hard time for the family. The Key Worker supported Charlie to make sure that all the utility bills were changed to his name and applied for Council Tax exemption due to his disability.

A Care Act Assessment was completed by Adult Social Care and a package of support was provided for Charlie. The Key Worker referred Charlie's son to Signpost for Young Carers and Pure Innovations. She encouraged his son to reach out to his GP for mental health support and he started counselling with Healthy Minds.

Charlie says, 'My Key Worker was a life saver. I'd lost my sight two years ago and was struggling to cope. She was kind, down to earth and straightforward and helped me understand it all. I don't know where we would've been without her. I feel like, though life can be challenging, we do have a future now'.

- 2.88. SKylight has also worked with PURE and Age UK Stockport to secure and mobilise contracts for the Community Hub tender (which supports connections in the community and tackles isolation) and Help at Home tender (which supports independent living particularly for older people, people with disabilities and carers). SKylight acts as a sub-contractor and employs one Officer for each contract.
- 2.89. Across the whole of the Community Hub partners there have been 604 referrals for 1:1 support in 2023/24. SKylight's Officer coordinates a caseload of approximately 20 customers providing support for individuals struggling with social isolation, assisting with the Start the Week group on Monday Afternoons. During the last year the Skylight Officer has received a total of 68 referrals 30 of which were provided solely by SHG colleagues.
- 2.90. The SKylight Officer delivering The Help at Home contract manages an average caseload of 28 people needing support to maintain their living conditions. Over the course of the year, support has been provided to 64 customers, providing advice and support as well as practical assistance with clearing the home and arranging deep cleans.
- 2.91. *Case study*

Michelle contacted her Neighbourhood Housing Officer (NHO) to discuss the Mutual Exchange process as she wanted to move to Hazel Grove to be nearer friends due to feeling socially isolated in her current location. When the NHO visited the property they found Michelle's property had significant amounts of clutter with lots of rubbish bags containing refuse in all her rooms. Michelle explained that her friend who was supporting her to maintain the property had passed away seven months prior and that they had supported her to control her hoarding behaviours, she also noted that she struggled practically to clear rubbish due to mobility issues.

Michelle was referred to the Help at Home Officer to address the condition of her property and provide support with her physical and mental health issues. The Officer worked closely to build rapport, mindful of past issues which needed to be taken into consideration at the early stages of engagement. It took a long period before Michelle felt confident to allow the Officer into her property, it was only through active listening that Michelle opened up about her grief and the embarrassment she suffered about the condition of the flat that she finally felt the confidence to allow the Officer into her home.

A realistic and achievable personal action plan was created jointly with Michelle. It was clear that Michelle required support with clearing, cleaning and maintaining her flat and managing her mental and physical health. Michelle

disclosed that she had been heavily affected by a number of bereavements and suicides within her family. She was also socially isolated and her concerns around the poor condition of the flat prevented her from inviting people to visit.

Michelle has been included in every step of improving her property, she was concerned about strangers entering the property to clear it and preferred to work on a one-on-one basis with the Help at Home Officer to clear her space. To date, 63 bags of rubbish have been cleared, via a patient and methodical process. On occasions Michelle has found items which have triggered negative feelings and emotions, when this has occurred the Help at Home Officer has been there to support her to take time and reflect. Michelle is supported with regular contact and appointments to ensure that progress is maintained and discussions have been held on the importance of self-care. Michelle has noted her physical health has improved now she is able to get around the property and sleep in her bed.

Michelle has shared how thankful she is for the Help at Home service stating she feels more motivated and ready to achieve her future goals.

- 2.92. Skylight also work in partnership with Age UK Stockport, Talk, Listen, Change, and Stockport Without Abuse to deliver the Domestic Abuse Support offer as part of Stockport Support Hub. Domestic Abuse Support work with people who experience domestic abuse, and those that cause harm to help develop healthier relationships. In 2023/24, 815 people were referred to the Domestic Abuse Support Service.

3. FINANCIAL POSITION

- 3.1. SKylight is a wholly owned subsidiary of Stockport Homes Ltd and 2023/24 is SKylight's fifth full year of trading.
- 3.2. The 2023/24 financial year has been a successful year for SKylight. Financial performance was in line with the approved budget. Gift Aid donations received were lower than in previous years, with the organisation reporting a decrease in funds for the year as a result.
- 3.3 The budget to deliver SKylight services during 2024/25 is £1,053,000. SKylight's income is made up of external funding, Gift Aid and income received from Stockport Homes for the delivery of services. SKylight's funds (reserves) position remains in a positive position at March 2024. The SKylight Board have approved a budget for 2024/25 which will see a substantial amount of these funds being used to support the planned continuation and enhancement of projects through the financial year 2024/25 and 2025/26, as it is not the aim of SKylight to hold higher levels of reserves than it deems necessary.
- 3.4 SKylight Board receive quarterly Progress & Finance Reports providing full details of the financial position of the charitable arm and offering an opportunity to plan for the future, exposing challenges and mitigating potential risk.

4. CONCLUSION

SKylight delivers a wide range of projects and services which support Stockport residents and communities to achieve positive outcomes, with detailed information provided on the significant achievements during 2023/24 within this report.

SKylight's services and ambitions continue to grow in ways which ultimately support the growth and overall aims of Stockport Homes Group and Stockport Council.

5. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That Members Committee note and discuss the progress made by SKylight in 2023/24.