

## **Routes to Roots (Poole) CIO (R2R) Business Plan – May 2020 to April 2023**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this Business Plan is to describe Routes to Roots' activities and plans for the three-year period from 1 May 2020 to 30 April 2023. It was developed during email and telephone correspondence of the R2R Trustees in April 2020 as meetings could not take place during the coronavirus crisis.

Routes to Roots (R2R) has operated for over 20 years and became a registered charity in 2002. Throughout this time, the charity has evolved, formalised its governance and initiated various activities to meet its aims and in 2014 became a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) adopting a new constitution, which continues the work of the original charity. The new CIO was registered on 26 February 2014.

Routes to Roots supports rough sleepers, vulnerably housed (sofa surfers or in B&Bs) and newly housed (formerly homeless) adults in Poole, Dorset. Today we have around 80 volunteers, two part-time staff and five Trustees.

At five drop-ins (three lunchtime and two evening) we provide basic necessities, such as showers, hot food, clothing and sleeping bags, and offer outreach access to the BCP Council addictions team, mental health workers, St Mungo's rough sleeper outreach team and housing advisers. Since December 2015, we have offered temporary supported housing for verified rough sleepers at our three-bed Amos House, working closely with the local authorities to move them on into independent accommodation.

Currently we work from the United Reformed Church in Skinner Street, Poole, where we have a small office with access to a hall and kitchen for the five drop-ins. In 2018, we added a fortnightly Sunday lunch. Unfortunately, because of use of the church hall by other organisations, we are limited on the days and times that we can be open (typically 90 minutes in the evening and 3 hours in the daytime). In Poole there is no Sleepsafe programme to take rough sleepers off the streets during winter and the only provision available is SWEP (Severe Weather Emergency Protocol), which provides rough sleepers with sleeping accommodation on nights when the temperature is below zero for three consecutive days, currently operating out of Skinner Street URC.

In February 2020 we acquired our own premises – the former Hill Street Baptist Church where we held our first drop-ins. We own the building outright from our own funds, with significant help from The Talbot Village Trust and a grant from Help the Homeless.

### **R2R's position from May 2020 is as follows:**

#### Vision

To provide rough sleepers and vulnerably housed people in Poole with hope for the future.

### Mission

R2R is a Poole Christian charity providing a personalised service to rough sleepers and vulnerably housed adults, to enable them to become rooted in the community.

### Aims

R2R aims:

- To encourage participation rather than dependency
- To provide a place of security and warmth, through drop-ins, where there is immediate social and spiritual support as well as the basic necessities for life: food, clothing, a place to wash and a place to rest
- To expand the provision of its services to a full-time resource centre for clients, now that we own our own building and are not limited by our rental agreement
- To put an end to the recycling of homelessness and to ensure that once accommodated, clients are able to access the help and assistance they need to maintain that accommodation and become rooted in their community
- To provide support needs on an individual basis, tailored to the client, providing clear assessment and progression achieved
- To develop client self-esteem, self-awareness, social skills, community engagement and employment skills by providing opportunities for team working, volunteering and training
- To act as an advocate for the client with other agencies, such as landlords, mental health teams, addiction teams, council officers, police, probation, etc.
- To inspire, encourage and equip the people of Poole to respond to the needs of homeless people with compassion, in ways that are creative and liberating
- To collaborate with other agencies, organisations and groups in Poole, who work with rough sleepers and vulnerably housed adults
- To continue provision of supported housing at our three bed 'Amos House'

This may be summarised as follows:

“Routes to Roots is founded on Christian principles and seeks to help all homeless, newly homed and vulnerably housed adults in Poole regardless of their faith. At drop-ins, we provide basic necessities, such as hot food, clothing and sleeping bags; we assist clients to engage with agencies such as the addictions team, health workers and Job Centre; we organise motivational activities; and we assist those who are placed in accommodation to remain in their tenancy. Since acquiring our three-bed 'Amos House' in 2015, we provide supported housing for people who were previously rough sleeping in Poole. We aim to achieve long-term outcomes for our clients through participation in motivational and well-being projects which boost self-confidence and self-worth, expand and develop skills, promote a sense of belonging and encourage integration into the local community.”

### **Our Core Work Includes:**

1. Outreach: R2R provides space for outreach workers in the areas of addiction and mental health, physical health, housing and benefits to meet clients in a familiar and unthreatening environment. This improves access to, and take-up of, these important services to resolve the problems that cause homelessness.

2. Providing Basic Necessities of Life: R2R provides a hot meal five times a week, fortnightly Sunday lunch and breakfast for rough sleepers during the cold weather months, clothing, sleeping bags, and practical assistance for those moving into accommodation, as needed. We also signpost rough sleepers to other support such as local soup runs.
3. Prevention and Social Inclusion: R2R works with those who are currently housed to help minimise the risk of repeated homelessness. We give support to those who are in danger of losing their tenancies through whatever means, such as non-payment of top-up fees, etc. Additionally, we encourage and work with clients who are struggling with addictions. We also work with those who might choose to give up their housing because of their isolation and loneliness by encouraging social participation and developing their living skills.
4. Life Skills and Wellbeing: R2R has provided projects to develop self esteem, self-awareness, social skills, and employment skills through participation in team working, volunteering, and training and also provided creative activities including art workshops, drama workshops, cooking, etc. We plan to continue to provide these as possible. These are dependent on volunteer involvement and funding, but we plan to continue to take advantage of every opportunity.
5. Engaging the Local Community: R2R offers opportunities to groups, businesses and individuals to volunteer, support and fundraise. To inform, inspire and raise awareness in local businesses, schools, community groups, and churches, R2R volunteers give presentations and talks about the charity's vision and mission.
6. Advocacy: R2R monitors the current situation for homeless and vulnerably housed people in Poole and acts as an advocate for them with police, local government and services.

### **Planned Programme: 2020-2023**

The scope of this business plan is three years: the plan will be reviewed annually. R2R will undertake the following activities as its core work for the duration of this business plan. Funding will be sought for the continuation of this work.

1. Creation of a Full-Time Resource Centre, 'A Place for Change': Since February 2020 we have owned the former Hill Street Baptist Church, located in the centre of Poole Town and close to the Job Centre. It has two large halls, suitable not only for our drop-ins but also to accommodate SWEP (the emergency cold weather shelter) and a more permanent cold weather shelter. Additionally, there is enough room for us to install showers, a laundry, and create areas for clients to access the various outreach services in privacy.

This building is in need of substantial refurbishment, which will include a new heating system, ceiling insulation, kitchen, showers, laundry room and office space. We have obtained grants and donations, which will enable us to begin work on the building and will continue to source more to complete the work. Our hope is to be able to move in by Autumn 2020 in order to allow a winter shelter to be set up. However, we are uncertain at present what effect the coronavirus crisis will have on our building plans, so this may be delayed. We can remain in our current location as long as needed while the work is being undertaken.

Our aim is to establish this building as a Place for Change, the focus of all support available in Poole for our clients, through partnership with all relevant local agencies. Once moved in, we will look to extending our opening hours/days and services as volunteers and funds permit, with the aim of moving to a seven-day service.

2. Evening Drop-Ins: R2R currently provides a hot meal at Skinner Street for around 25 homeless and vulnerably housed people twice a week. The funding for this project comes from R2R's general funds: these funds will continue to support this project and additional funding will be sought through grant applications. Soup runs are provided by churches in Poole on the other five nights of the week under Poole's railway bridge. Once established in our own building, R2R intends to invite the churches to bring their soup runs indoors so as to offer evening meals in a warm and safe environment seven days a week.
3. Afternoon Drop-Ins: R2R runs three afternoon sessions a week during which a range of outreach services are provided to empower and support the clients. Currently these include a mental health nurse, physical health nurse, EDAS (Essential Drugs & Alcohol Services), BCP Council housing officer and St Mungo's rough sleeper outreach team. A hairdresser also visits twice a month. The funding for this project comes from R2R's general funds with additional funding being sought through grant applications. Once established in our own building, as funding and volunteer support permit, R2R would like to be open seven days a week and increase the daytime outreach services offered to include financial advice, training and other opportunities to help our clients move back into the community.
4. Hot Breakfast for Rough Sleepers: For several years, R2R has provided hot cooked breakfasts to verified rough sleepers from December to March. These are currently provided by The Spire Community Café in Poole High Street. We will continue to seek funding to maintain this provision for rough sleepers to keep them as healthy as possible through winter. Once established in our own building, R2R plans to integrate this provision into the services we will provide.
5. Amos House: R2R provides supported housing for three men at Amos House. R2R will conduct a feasibility study and consider opportunities for the purchase of a second premises to house a further three or more people. This will probably be for our female clients as they represent 22% of our client group.
6. Engagement with the Local Community: R2R has developed a presence within the business and local community. However, more work is planned to develop long-term relationships and sustainable support from local businesses and community. Regular newsletters, the R2R website, Facebook and Twitter have all increased the reach of R2R into the local community and beyond. Local churches have been responsive to direct appeals.

The announcement of our acquisition of the Hill Street Baptist Church and our plans for its future has received a warm response from the local business community, local politicians and Police & Crime Commissioner.

7. Outdoor Volunteering for Clients: R2R intends to continue submitting clients for Holton Lee's Project Flourish and will investigate other opportunities as they arise.

8. Staffing: Once established in our own building, R2R will review our staffing needs and likely develop a new plan for staffing the charity.