

Patron: The Right Reverend Karen Gorham, Bishop of Sherborne

Routes to Roots (Poole) CIO Business Plan July 2022 to June 2025



Introduction

The purpose of this Business Plan is to describe Routes to Roots' activities and plans for the three-year period from July 2022 to June 2025.

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. We had the Grand Opening of the now named Genesis Centre in March 2022. Routes to Roots has been operating from the new premises since March 2022.

In 2022, Routes to Roots (R2R) celebrated its 20th Anniversary of becoming 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 50 volunteers, one full time and one part-time member of staff and five Trustees.

At five lunchtime drop-ins we provide basic necessities, such as showers, hot food, clothing and sleeping bags, laundry, postal address for those who need one, and offer outreach access to the BCP Council addictions team, mental health workers, St Mungo's rough sleeper outreach team and housing advisers. We also offer listening, conversation and a chance to relax in comfortable surroundings.

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.

Routes to Roots was awarded the Queens Award for Voluntary Service (the MBE for Volunteer Groups) in June 2022.



R2R's position from July 2022:

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

- 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 provide a full-time resource centre for clients
- 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 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; 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 housing for people who were previously homeless 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. Access to Services: 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, breakfast on Monday and Friday, clothing, washing facilities, showers with clean towels and toiletries, 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 (such as through 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 feel isolated and lonely after moving into accommodation.
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 aspire to take advantage of every opportunity. We also signpost to other local wellbeing and life skills programmes.
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 Growth 2022-2025

The scope of this business plan is three years: the plan will be reviewed annually. R2R will undertake the following activities in addition to its core work for the duration of this business plan.

1. Development of the Genesis Centre: 'A Place for Change' and a Community Building: We opened the Genesis Centre in March 2022, after we completed Phase One of the building project. We need to raise the money to complete Phase Two, which will include the refurbishment of the Activities Hall and the Clothing Store and also the installation of air source heat pumps. On completion of this building work, we will

be able to offer more services, including the possibility of a winter shelter. It is our aim to be able to offer these spaces to other charities and organisations which may wish to use the space.

2. Drop-Ins: R2R currently provides a lunchtime hot meal and services for homeless and vulnerably housed people five days/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. Evening soup runs are provided by churches in Poole under Poole's railway bridge. Now that we are established in our own building, R2R intends to invite the churches to bring their soup runs indoors to offer evening meals in a warm and safe environment seven days a week. Before Covid, Sunday lunches were provided by local Churches. We are working to re-start this provision. Additionally, our former Chair, Rev'd Pat Southgate, is working on our provision of pastoral care to our clients.
3. Afternoon Drop-Ins: R2R runs five 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, a chiropodist, We Are With You (drug and alcohol services), BCP Council housing officer and the St Mungo's rough sleeper outreach team. The funding for this project comes from R2R's general funds with additional funding being sought through grant applications. As funding and volunteer support permits, R2R would like increase the daytime outreach services offered to include financial advice, training, and other opportunities to help our clients move back into the community.
4. Morning Drop Ins: On Monday and Friday mornings, we offer a hot breakfast for verified Rough Sleepers. During these sessions, they can access services that are specific to their needs (for example, form filling). We have recently started a Women's Group on Thursday mornings to provide a safe space for women who are rough sleeping and/or are vulnerably housed. During these sessions, we aim to provide services that are tailored to their needs as well as leisure activities such as crocheting and art. We aspire to offer other services on Tuesday and Wednesday mornings, as volunteers and activities are available.
5. Amos House: R2R has provided supported housing for three men at Amos House (2015 to 2022). At present, we are reviewing this facility to ensure that we are meeting the right target 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 opening of the Genesis Centre and our plans for its future has received a warm

response from the local business community, local politicians, and Police & Crime Commissioner.

7. Develop Volunteers: R2R has provided ad hoc training for volunteers in the past. The Genesis Centre Manager is working on a more rigorous training programme for all volunteers, especially for team leaders and volunteers who will use our database programme, Lamplight.