



RUSH

EMPOWERING ALL TO BE HAPPY, HEALTHY AND SAFE

Annual Report 2023-2024



Rush House Ltd
Best Youth Homes/tenancies
Support Charity 2022 - South Yorkshire



INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE



COMMUNITY
FUND



FUNDRAISING
REGULATOR



Nick Knowles Chair of Rush House Board of Trustees

This period has continued to be a busy and challenging time. We've had some expense in repairing damaged property and the loss of income associated with that, but on a different note we are excited to explore the prospect of purchasing our first properties. We have welcomed one new board member as well as additions to the Rush Team.

We appreciate the cost of living crisis continues to impact on all our lives, so were pleased to be able to support a pay rise. I know that I speak for all the board when I say that we truly appreciate the hard work that each and every member of the Rush Team delivers, you make Rush what it is and its reputation stands because of you.

As always the Rush Team has identified and delivered services that are needed and, within the multiagency collaboration work, the Girls Group has received great praise. I know that all the sessions and drop in groups are greatly appreciated and well received, it seems like there is always something happening for the young people to engage with.

The AQA delivery continues to go from strength to strength with many clients signing up for and completing AQA units. Work on the new APOYO (A Place of Your Own) portal is moving at a good pace. Changes are being introduced that will make it accessible to many more people. I'm sure it will be appreciated as a great asset to numerous service providers and users, as demonstrated by the financial support from RMBC to deliver the service free to Rotherham tenants for this year. Ongoing work will hopefully see this product become self sustaining.

Brighter Futures has supported people already in work as well as coaching people back into work, with positive feedback from service users and from the Matrix assessment submitted.

Going forward we have completed our registration with Ofsted and look forward to the opportunities this could bring.

Once again on behalf of the Board of Trustees, to Rachael Wilson CEO and the entire team, thank you for your passion and commitment, we really appreciate you all as individuals and a team.

Nick Knowles



Rachael Wilson CEO

2024 has seen me hit the 15 year milestone of working at Rush with the last 8 years as Chief Executive. During my time we have experienced some low points but many more delightful highs, and I remain very proud of the dedicated team I have at Rush and our many achievements over the years.



The last year has been a year of progress for all at Rush House. Our strategic plan has been at the forefront of all we do as we work together to achieve our objectives. We are taking huge steps to improve our IT capacity, our Information Management System has been installed and is almost ready for take off. We have taken on a new building that has 5 single occupancy flats and invested time and money to make them comfortable and homely for the 5 residents occupying them.

We have strengthened our commitment to the environment by completing Environmental Leadership training and introducing an Environmental policy alongside having an action plan in place which includes some relatively simple measures such as buying A rated electrical products, installing LED lighting, car sharing where possible and recycling. We have also introduced our residents to the benefits of recycling and support them to do so, as well as helping them learn more about the environment and benefits of recycling through our AQA units, giving them greater knowledge and understanding, as well as a fabulous addition to their CV.

Our pledge to staff welfare continues to grow with the ongoing commitment to Westfield Health scheme, flexible working, 1 additional leave day for wellbeing, access to relevant training, regular supervision, monthly Health and Safety drop ins, regular coffee and cake mornings and more recently, access to Menopause Awareness training which has led to the development of a Menopause policy. We hope to have this policy completed and ratified during the summer of 2024. Alongside this our Board of Trustees have also committed to becoming a Real Living Wage employer and this will come in to effect from 1st April 2024.

The staff team has continued to grow and we have welcomed 3 new additions to the team. Paula is our Life Skills Manager tasked with developing and delivering our life skills offer, Jamie is our new Head of Development and Housing and is leading on the growth of our business and property portfolio and Vicki who has joined our Business and Finance team following the departure of our dear colleague Rachael who has now retired after 30 years of service. Rachael's commitment and knowledge of Rush is unmatched and will be greatly missed by all. We wish Rachael all the best in retirement.

With great sadness we also had to say goodbye to our colleague Rodger Kelly who passed away suddenly back in November 2023. Rodger was a great character with a kind and caring nature and was always on hand to support anyone in any way he could. He will always be missed. We do plan to have a little tribute to him on our outdoor art wall when the weather improves which will allow us to remember the many fond memories we have of him.

A large part of my focus this year has been preparing for Ofsted registration after being informed that all supported accommodation providers for Looked After children and Care Leavers under 18 in the UK will need to be registered. Deciding to apply for registration was one we had to give some thought to, taking into account our size, the cost and the work involved. However having looked at the regulations we were confident Rush could meet the criteria required and work began. Our application was submitted before the October deadline with myself as the Responsible Person and our Accommodation Manager Steve Harris as the Registered Manager. Our application was passed and we had our initial inspection visit in February. The inspector met with both myself and Steve to assess our capability and visited several of our accommodation units before speaking with some residents. In March 2024 we were delighted to receive confirmation that our application and inspection had been successful and we were now an Ofsted registered provider.

We will continue the work we have started in reviewing our policies and procedures to ensure they meet with Ofsted guidelines and continue to improve our practice to ensure all our residents receive the best support and accommodation in order for them to achieve their independent living goals. Ofsted inspections will begin in September 2024 with inspectors using their recently developed evaluation criteria to assess whether support for children is effective and to determine what impact that support is having on children's experiences and progress.

In September 2023 we were delighted to find out that our partnership with Roundabout to deliver 12 units of supported accommodation to homeless 16-25 year olds from our hostel at Lindum Terrace would continue after a successful tendering process which was commissioned by RMBC.

A successful application to Leeds Building Society (LBS) and a fantastic pitch delivered to LBS colleagues by our Head of Services, Lisa, has seen us secure further funding to develop our 'A Place of Your Own' training programme. The funding allowed us to employ a new colleague, Dave Baugh, who will focus on the delivery and development of the programme, which will include a new section on home ownership and making it accessible through the website in a variety of languages.

We secured several grants throughout the year from Smiles for Miles, South Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit, Tesco Community and Open Arms funding which allowed us to continue our delivery of group sessions that focus predominantly on wellbeing activities for our young residents and service users.

Christmas time this year was as always a special one at Rush. Our staff team worked incredibly hard to make sure everyone had a gift to open on the big day and we were again fortunate to receive many donations from the Rotherham community who never fail to amaze us with their generosity. We also had a donation of beanie hats, socks and underwear from our CenterPoint partners.

In March 2024, we were delighted to learn that our application to the National Lottery Reaching Communities fund, as part of the Children, Young People and Families Consortium, to continue to deliver the Smiles for Miles services, had been successful. This will not only allow Rush to continue the delivery of our Girls Group but also gives us the chance to do a similar piece of work with our young men. This funding is for 3 years and will see 13 Rotherham Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations providing multiple projects throughout the borough that focus on health and wellbeing support for children, young people and families.

It has also been my honour this year, as Chairperson of Rotherham Children, Young people and Families Consortium, to host the 20th Anniversary celebration event, which was attended by many VCS organisations as well as the Mayor of Rotherham, Robert Taylor. I had the pleasure of signing 28 certificates which were handed out to Consortium members on the day thanking them all for the valuable contribution, not only to the Consortium but to improving the lives of Rotherham people over the last 20 years.



My thanks go to Nick (Chairperson) and the Trustees who place their trust in me and support me year upon year. Their commitment and passion for Rush and the work we do is truly commendable. My Management Team, who have adjusted to new ways of working over the last 12 months with enthusiasm and continue to not only develop themselves, but the services they provide to ensure we can meet the needs of those most vulnerable. We have been delighted to welcome 2 new managers to the team, Jamie Prescott and Paula Martin, who bring with them a wealth of skills knowledge and experience to support organisational growth. We have celebrated work anniversaries for both Lisa (20 years) and Steve (10 years) this year and thank them for their dedication and tireless efforts to Rush and the people we support.





Lisa Rachieru Head of Services

Overview

Well what a thoroughly exciting, enjoyable, successful and emotional year it has been for me at Rush. This year (13th October 2023) marked my 20th anniversary at Rush and I could not be happier or more proud to still be involved with this marvellous organisation. I have been particularly thrilled this year to welcome Jamie Prescott back to Rush given that he was such a great mentor in my early years. To be back working alongside him on a strategic level is really humbling and exciting and I know he will bring so much to Rush, particularly around property procurement which is an area I have found challenging particularly in my role. Jamie brings with him a wealth of knowledge and contacts and I know this will make all the difference.

Here's to the next 20 years (I think 😊)



This year has been one of great change and development for the organisation and for myself as a leader. To assist me in the development of the Life Skills offer, it was great to recruit to the Life Skills Project Manager position, and in September we welcomed Paula Martin to the role, later followed by Cassie Kelly taking up the Life Skills Worker position and Dave Baugh completing my new Life Skills Team in the role of Tenancy Skills Coach. With them they bring a wealth of knowledge, experience, skills and passion for supporting clients to achieve the very best and I know that alongside our existing Brighter Futures staff I have the absolute best team around me to deliver our vision.

I have really enjoyed being involved in taking forward the development of Clara Place following our initial discussions with SYHA (South Yorkshire Housing Association) earlier this year. Seeing the site develop over the months and liaising with our contacts at SYHA to communicate our needs and wishes for the development has been key.

Key achievements/highlights

Networking & Connection – I am thrilled that I have been able to continue and enhance current partnerships and develop new ones. I simply couldn't do my role without the support of so many others and I really appreciate the opportunities that my role affords me to meet and liaise with so many wonderful people and organisations. I very much intend to use these connections to bring local businesses on board to enhance our Brighter Futures offer by offering work based learning and employment opportunities.

Wellbeing – Back in April 2023 I successfully applied to South Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit and was granted around £17k for 'Rush to Wellness', a project focused on wellbeing. We worked with:

- RB (Rotherham and Barnsley) MIND – counselling group sessions
- Survive Strive Thrive – emotional resilience workshops
- Aromaglow Therapies – alternative therapies and mindfulness activities
- Kazuko Martial Arts – mixed group self defence and martial arts sessions
- Rush 'in house' sessions – walking activities, PRIDE Doncaster, self care Sundays.

This project was particularly satisfying to put together as it really gave young people some unique opportunities. We accepted an offer to engage with Rocket Science Lab the chosen external evaluation provider, and took from their independent evaluation some really great feedback.

“When I first came to Rush, if I'm honest with it, I didn't expect anything like it. I expected I'd literally just be there sleeping and then coming downstairs for food... but I'm down here every day pretty much because the people around me are just amazing people to be around. It's just a good life.” – *Young Person*

In July 2023 I hosted a wellbeing event at Tesco Community Room for staff and young people. We welcomed Sean Gill from Andy's Man Club to talk about their awesome work. Sarah Scott (Crisis and Home Treatment Team Manager) to share insights about Rotherham mental health services. Lastly we welcomed Jo Keen from Green Tomato Consultancy to talk to us about Menopause and the impact it has on women, particularly in the workplace. I thank all guest speakers for their time it was a great afternoon and we learned a lot.



Leeds Building Society (LBS) – my biggest achievement this year was to coproduce a ‘pitch’ to the Leeds Building Society ‘Dragons Den’ to fund ongoing development of APOYO. This meant numerous trips to Leeds for the pitch itself which I am thrilled to say was successful and then returning to Leeds to record a clip for the funding release video and then on to Headingley Stadium to stand in front of hundreds of LBS senior staff to talk to them about what the funding will do for Rush. A true career highlight to date and one that will not easily be matched in terms of pushing me to develop skills that I didn’t know I had. More on this later.....

Looking to the future

As we bring this year to a close it is time to reflect on another great year for Rush and look forward to what comes next. My key aims and objectives for 2024/2025:

- **Leeds Building Society** – I am thrilled to be working alongside colleagues from LBS and our own team here at Rush to coproduce the Home Ownership module for A Place of Your Own which we are aptly referring to as ‘A Place You Can Own’. I also hope to continue to forge links with other LBS teams as I tap into their volunteer programme for areas such as Learning and Development, property refurb and more.
- **Smiles for Miles 2:0** – after the resounding success of our Smiles for Miles collaboration with RCYPF (Rotherham Children, Young People and Families Consortium) partners I am thrilled that we have once again been successful in acquiring funding from The National Lottery to continue and expand on this great project. I look forward to further strengthening our partnership working, delivering and developing our offer around personal development for young people.
- **Wellbeing** – I hope to continue my interest in all things wellbeing as I continue to look for funding opportunities to increase our offer and bring back on to the timetable the amazing providers we have worked with. In terms of staff wellbeing I look forward to organising a much needed staff social as we welcome new staff to the growing Rush team and on continuing my work on Menopause in the workplace.
- **Brighter Futures** – to build on the success of Year 1 as we move through and into Year 2 which has got off to a great start. My key objectives are to engage with local businesses, work collaboratively with our Brighter Futures team, to ensure the service remains respondent to client need and delivering outcomes and to work with Rachael to seek funding to secure the future of Brighter Futures.
- **Skills Street** - Skills Street is an immersive and innovative careers training experience developed to inspire and inform children, young people, and adults from across the South Yorkshire region. Based on the site of Gulliver’s Valley Resort, Skills Street will transform the way the region delivers careers training for schools with this new hands on approach to developing, growing and honing skills. We have continued our connection with Skills Street over the last 12 months as we patiently await its opening sometime around September 2024 and look forward to delivering our Brighter Futures offer. We liaise regularly with the Managing Director (Julie Dalton) about the position our Brighter Futures service will take within Skills Street to offer EET (Education, Employment and Training) support to those 16+ who engage with the experience. 2024/25 will be focused on connection-collaboration-aspiration and bringing our knowledge and expertise to the wider audience.



Jamie Prescott Head of Business Development

Overview

2023 was certainly an interesting and exciting year for me as I took up the role of Head of Business Development at Rush. I am employed for 3 days a week to look at Business Development opportunities with a particular focus on creating a property portfolio, widening our support offer geographically and exploring different client groups.

How we diversified our client group was an interesting journey for me. I came to Rush with tried and tested ideas and I was keen to emulate past successes. However, Rush had a lot to teach me.

Rush had recently acquired a block of 5 self contained apartments which were being renovated and this was a fantastic opportunity to start our journey diversifying our client group. Although we started in one direction, by being part of the Rotherham Strategic Housing Forum and attending some key meetings with Social Care Procurement, we quickly realised that there were additional housing pressures being placed on the Local Authority, trying to appropriately house Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC). Here was where I felt I could support Rush to make a name for itself as a provider of high quality, specialist accommodation for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children thus delivering on 2 of our key strategic objectives.

The experience of leaving their home country puts these young people at risk of developing mental health challenges. With the best intentions, this cohort are often placed into supported accommodation that isn't appropriate or effective for their unique support needs, often with a client cohort with whom they share little/no common experience. This can be detrimental to how they settle. Additional training for our staff and understanding reactions to trauma and loss are paramount to this project and of course, crucial in supporting unaccompanied asylum seeking adolescents with complex psychological and social issues as a result of fleeing their home countries.

Key achievements/highlights

Bringing Clara Place to life - we are now using these units to alleviate the pressures on existing services, who are not always equipped to deal with these young people and the trauma type they are often experiencing as Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children. The fact that this accommodation is under a block booking agreement with the Local Authority offers Rush some much needed financial security to ensure we can invest in the development of services. As Head of Business Development this is a key to long term financial stability and future development.

Recognition - excitingly, the success at Clara Place has been widely recognised with Rotherham Local Authority asking us to provide tenancy support services to UASC clients within some of their own accommodation. We have received some wonderful feedback from commissioners about the support we provide. This will undoubtedly prove vital for our future ventures.

Connection - much of my early time at Rush has been about connection. I brought with me to the role a number of key contacts in the arena of property procurement and have developed many more over recent months. I can now see these connections leading to tangible developments for Rush and I am excited to continue on this path, knowing full well there's more connections to make particularly with local property developers and landlords.

Looking to the future

To procure property we are exploring several options, with a view to utilise all options rather than rely upon one supply chain as Rush has had to do for so many years.

The private rented sector - although rents have become increasingly high over the last 12 months with little signs of this trend abating, we have built some key contacts that will be crucial to the procurement plan moving into 2024/2025.

Mortgages - we have made contact with a mortgage provider who specialises in working with Charities and received a very positive response from them in terms of receiving an application from us. Several large pieces of work had to be undertaken to allow us to move forward in this direction.

We have updated our Company Risk Register and the Board have sanctioned a new Code of Governance. There are other changes that will need to be made going forward but I am confident that these changes can/will be made to allow Rush to enter into a new phase in our development and growth.

Social Investment Companies.

In October one of the first tasks I set myself was to explore Social Investment. Contacts have been made and a lot of interest shown in the work of Rush. Funding is currently unavailable but we have an agreement to restart communication in winter 2024.

To conclude, 2024/25 has much potential with aims to expand our dispersed offer by 120%, buy our first Rush owned properties, recruit another full time Keyworker and a full time Maintenance Operative, as well as increase our office space.





Steve Harris Manager Supported Housing

Overview

On a personal note, this year saw me hit my 10 year anniversary with Rush. I joined Rush in 2014 as a keyworker on a temporary basis and I've managed to remain here. I have had lots of opportunity for professional development going from keyworker to management during my time at Rush with several successful small management projects under my belt. I am still as passionate about Rush today (even more so) as I was when I first walked through the door and am proud to be a part of the Rush Management Team.



This past year has seen our support and keyworker teams develop and I am incredibly proud to lead these teams. Their enthusiasm and dedication to support young people at Rush to be the best they can be has been nothing short of amazing and clearly they are as proud to work for Rush as I am. Their commitment to embracing and supporting (but mostly learning from) the UASC (Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children) young people has been incredible, as it has been a learning curve for us all, but one we have embraced full on and am proud to say that the feedback we have received from commissioning and leaving care teams, has been nothing short of positive.

Key achievements/highlights

Ofsted - One particularly challenging area throughout this year was Rush becoming Ofsted registered with myself as Registered Service Manager and Rachael Wilson (CEO) becoming the Nominated Individual. This has been very new to navigate but not something that we were afraid of as we have been continuously reviewed under Quality Assessment Framework, Investors in People and above all we know and are proud of how good a job we do of supporting young people to be the best that they can be. I am very proud of the work I put in to getting us ready for registration which included amending and developing documentation such as reviewing resident policies.

Clara Place – having acquired the new accommodation project I have been proud to support Jamie Prescott in developing the service offer for the new residents. We have accommodated 5 asylum seekers who are over 18 and awaiting home office decisions. It has been a great team effort to get Clara Place up and running and I am excited to lead my team in delivering the best possible service that meets the needs of this new client group. We have in place twice daily visits to the accommodation to ensure that they are supported to a high level and feedback from commissioning has been very positive.



Looking to the future

Strategic Plan - We are half way through our Strategic Plan (2022-2026) and are happy with the progress that has been made.

My specific focus is on:

1.1 To ensure our IT capacity and IMS that are fit for purpose, cost effective for our people and the organisation

We have purchased an Information Management System (Inform) which I am working on to ensure that it operates to a high standard and is specific to our needs for recording and reporting.

3.3 To develop and deliver a people development strategy that identifies and encourages individual growth.

I will be working closely with Head of Service for Life Skills & EET (Education, Employment and Training) Lisa, to ensure that Rush provides the best opportunities for development for Rush's staff.

4.3 To develop and deliver services in collaboration with our people to meet their needs.

Our focus is (and has always been) on collaboration, to improve the services for Rush service users, but also for the staff to ensure that Rush offers the best support to all.

EMPOWERING ALL TO BE HAPPY, HEALTHY AND SAFE



RUSH

STRATEGIC PLAN 2022 - 2026

Facilities and Services	Governance and Finance	Learning and Development	People and Communities
<p>Objectives:</p> <p>1.1 To ensure our IT capacity and IMS that are fit for purpose, cost effective for our people and the organisation.</p> <p>1.2 To continue to explore, research and harness opportunities to provide accommodation to meet the changing service demands and is sustainable for the future.</p> <p>1.3 To explore opportunities to further develop our commitment to the environment.</p>	<p>Objectives:</p> <p>2.1 To create and maintain a diverse and active board that represents the communities and people we serve.</p> <p>2.2 To maintain appealing staff packages throughout a VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous) environment.</p> <p>2.3 To generate alternative and sustainable income streams.</p>	<p>Objectives:</p> <p>3.1 To develop and deliver a communication strategy that will foster organisational growth and drive brand recognition (int/ext.)</p> <p>3.2 To build on leadership and management in developing collective growth and skills.</p> <p>3.3 To develop and deliver a people development strategy that identifies and encourages individual growth.</p>	<p>Objectives:</p> <p>4.1 To develop and deliver a volunteer programme that is dynamic and responsive to organisational needs.</p> <p>4.2 To increase speciality and tailored support services that serve our new and existing communities.</p> <p>4.3 To develop and deliver services in collaboration with our people to meet their needs.</p>

Mission Statement

Rush is committed to the delivery of excellence in the services we provide to those most vulnerable and excluded in society. We do this through encouraging individuals to meet their potential and thus contributing to their community in particular, and society in general.



Service Update for Supported Accommodation

Key achievements/highlights

Our focus is on working with young people who are accommodated with us to develop their independent living skills, enough so that they are able to move on to their own tenancy with the skills needed to maintain it. In 2023/2024 we have had a number of positive move ons, many moving from bedsits into dispersed accommodation, but specifically 3 young people gaining their own RMBC tenancies, 1 into Great Places accommodation and 1 moving into University accommodation.

We have accommodated 24 young people into bedsits under the RMBC 16-25 contract and 17 young people into our dispersed accommodation, of which 6 are UASC young people and 5 asylum seekers into Clara Place.

Case studies:

- **SW** – S came to Rush due to breakdown in relationship with family. S engaged amazingly throughout her stay and was supported to attend Rotherham University, and then supported to apply for Leeds University, she was accepted and moved to Leeds in September and is doing brilliantly.
- **CB** – C resided in one of our properties in the community. C engaged really well and was put forward for a property in a new housing development with Great Places. C was accepted and moved in to his own flat and remains in contact to let us know how well he is doing.
- **KC** – K had a very turbulent life, often ending up in and out of police custody, however since being accommodated with Rush, really focussed on making a better life for himself, he eventually engaged with support and managed to get his own property through RMBC where he lives happily with his girlfriend.

In December 2023 we were visited by Sheffield Commissioning Team to inspect some of our properties prior to Ofsted registration. The inspections were very useful and enabled us to make further improvements. The feedback from our residents to the inspectors made us proud as it was very positive and clearly showed how happy they were living at Rush. We have very constructive meetings and are always transparent on what we do and enjoy a very good working relationship with the commissioning teams we work with.



'Environmental Leadership'

Consultations – as part of our strategic plan, specifically 3.3, I regularly meet with all the young people at Rush to get their feedback, as simply they are the reason why we do what we do and we want to know how we can continue to meet their needs. Throughout the year the feedback has been amazing, they are happy with their accommodation and their support. We consult on various topics within Rush and are always open to suggestions, which has resulted in some changes, such as:

- Visiting hours changed
- Getting a bench for the front garden
- 1-2-1 baking / cooking sessions
- Celebrating events, such as Easter, Christmas, Eid
- Resident policies reviewed & amended as a result of feedback
- Resident living expectations reviewed & amended as a result of feedback
- Notice boards around the building – what the residents want and don't want to see on them
- Residents interview panel for recruitment



Displaying the hard work of our Young People

Looking forward

This coming year, my aim is to continue to work with commissioning teams to ensure our accommodation is the best it can be and that the residents of Rush feel 'at home' during their stay with us.

Also to continue our collaboration with Roundabout to support and move young people on into independence and ultimately their own accommodation, as this has been 'what we do' for over 40 years.

We are still seeing the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic delaying opportunities for young people to move in to social housing, due to the increase in demand for affordable housing, but hope to see this improve in the year ahead.



Viv Flinders Property Manager

Overview - The Maintenance Team has always prided itself on producing a good standard of accommodation for our clients, but through the lens of Ofsted and local commissioning partners, we recognised that our accommodation standard could be raised even higher by placing more focus on making the property more welcoming and homely for our clients. Taking into account their individual circumstances and preferences we have created spaces to truly give them that homely feeling.



Properties - As I start to look back to gather the information for this report I can see that a lot of focus for the Maintenance Team has been on refurbishing the properties. This in itself is not unusual, as we conduct regular works to ensure properties are maintained to a good standard of decoration and furnishing, however what has been particularly challenging this year is the number of serious incidences of damage that has left some properties uninhabitable.

- 1 flat has been refurbished with a new kitchen and bathroom, fully decorated, new carpets fitted throughout the property, and new white goods and new furnishings.
- 1 flat has received a full decoration, new carpets fitted throughout the property, and new white goods and new furnishings.
- 2 houses have received a full decoration, new carpets fitted throughout the property, and new white goods and new furnishings. Both properties were uninhabitable which through hard work from Rush House has turned these properties into high standard dwellings for our clients.
- 1 house has received a full decoration, new carpets fitted throughout the property, and new white goods and new furnishings.
- On 12th February 2024 we expanded our property portfolio with another 5 one bedroom flats. This accommodation block received new carpets fitted throughout the properties, new white goods fitted and new furnishings. All were provided with kitchen essentials (pans, cutlery, plates /bowls, etc.) new bedding, new towels, new curtains and new fitted blinds on all windows. The properties were ready on 23rd February for the new clients to move in to.
- August 2023 we handed back to SYHA (South Yorkshire Housing Association) property we had in Ferham, as Rush House had identified that this location was inappropriate for our service users due to antisocial behaviour in the local area.

- Rush House Maintenance Team has completed **187** repairs in our properties. The majority of repairs were completed for the client **within 24-36 hours**.

Gardens - Donation for Lindum Terrace



We received some funding from Breheny Civil Engineering to make some improvements to the front garden of 18-19 Lindum Terrace. A new picnic table was provided and new planters and baskets were filled with plants. This provided a lovely space for our residents to enjoy and for outdoor key work sessions to take place.

Key achievements:

Environment leadership - as part of our ongoing commitment within our Strategic Plan I have worked collaboratively with the rest of the Management Team to focus on our Environmental leadership. As a result of this, the following has been achieved:

- Environmental Recycling and Waste Management Policy/Procedures - written and agreed by Management
- Recycle Information Sheet completed and is included in staff training
- Rush has joined the RMBC recycling programme and is leasing an industrial bin of 660 litres, which has made a real difference by allowing us to recycle a large proportion of our waste
- The residents recycling programme started on the 28th April 2023. All residents in Lindum Terrace are encouraged to recycle and supported to do so

All external properties have had a survey of **Energy Efficiency Rating**. All properties achieved a C or D level rating. We will endeavour to work with our landlords and funders to continue to improve on this.



Looking to the future

I will be working together with senior leaders in the organisation to identify potential funders and to submit applications to those funders to provide sensor lighting throughout 18-19 Lindum Terrace, as we know this will have a significant positive impact on costs and our commitment to the environment. We will also aim to roll out our recycling programme to all tenants in external properties.



Michelle Corker Brighter Futures Project Manager

Overview

In this reporting period the team have successfully delivered on year one of our National Lottery funding and are a few months into year two. We submitted our end of year report to The National Lottery in January 2024 and we received great feedback from them.

As a team we have adapted our service and the delivery to suit our new cohort and yes it has been challenging at times, but as a whole the team have done brilliant. Our clients have received the person centred support they needed and have achieved some fantastic achievements in both their personal life and in their employment, training and educational journey.

Key achievements/highlights

Matrix Assessment – In October 2023 we went through our Matrix Assessment which focuses on the quality of the information, advice and guidance we provide. In previous years Rush has gone through Matrix as an entire organisation but this time the Matrix Assessment was focused just on the EET (Education, Employment and Training) services.

Networking & Connection – The team have been out and about networking over this reporting period and attended many events to promote our service and create new connections within our community.

A particular highlight was the Next Steps Careers event at Thomas Rotherham College (TRC) which was great to raise our profile with the younger age range.



TRC "Next Steps" Event

“The Extra Mile” - In addition to supporting clients with their education, employment and training journey, the team have addressed and supported other issues and barriers our clients have presented with, such as, housing related issues, budgeting and debt referrals and support, applying for benefits and health and wellbeing support. This Christmas, our coaches went the extra mile for some of our vulnerable clients by sourcing Christmas presents and food hampers for our families in need. Our clients were really grateful for our support where for many it is a stressful and difficult time of year and I am particularly proud of this aspect of our work.

“I always think about your help in such a difficult time. Every day when I put Sophia's boots on I remember you thank you so much. If you could spend a day at our house we would be very happy. The girls always remember you, especially Sylvia. Thank you very much many blessings.”

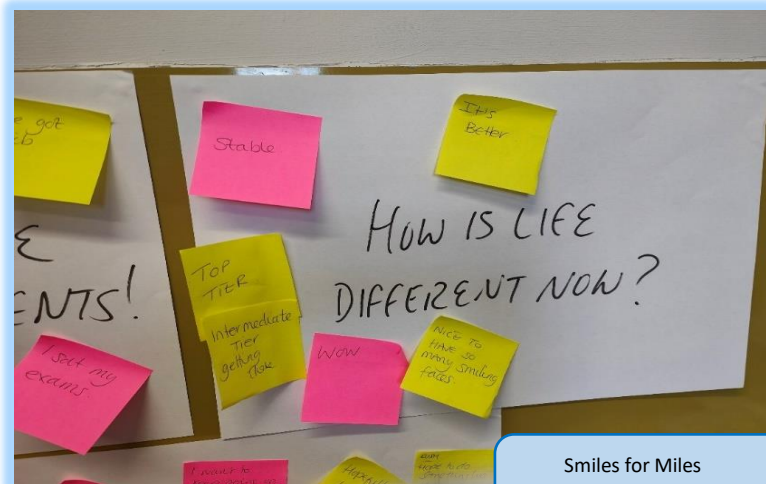
(D – Brighter Futures Client)

Looking to the future

Social Media – this continues to be an area of development for the Brighter Futures service as we try and engage more with social media platforms to access opportunities for our client cohort and to share our success. We will continue our focus to reach out to community groups in the borough and try to engage with new business and employers to offer work placements and opportunities for our clients.

The Brighter Futures team will continue their hard work to provide up to date and relevant information and support to our clients with the hope they move forward with their own education and employment journey.

Collaboration – as part of my ongoing work on strategic objective 4.3 I am keen to develop constructive ways to engage with clients and stakeholders to gain their valuable feedback to drive service development. I have some very strong relationships with key referring partners such as Department for Work and Pensions, and want to develop more connections to ensure that we are reaching the client cohorts who are the most in need of our support.



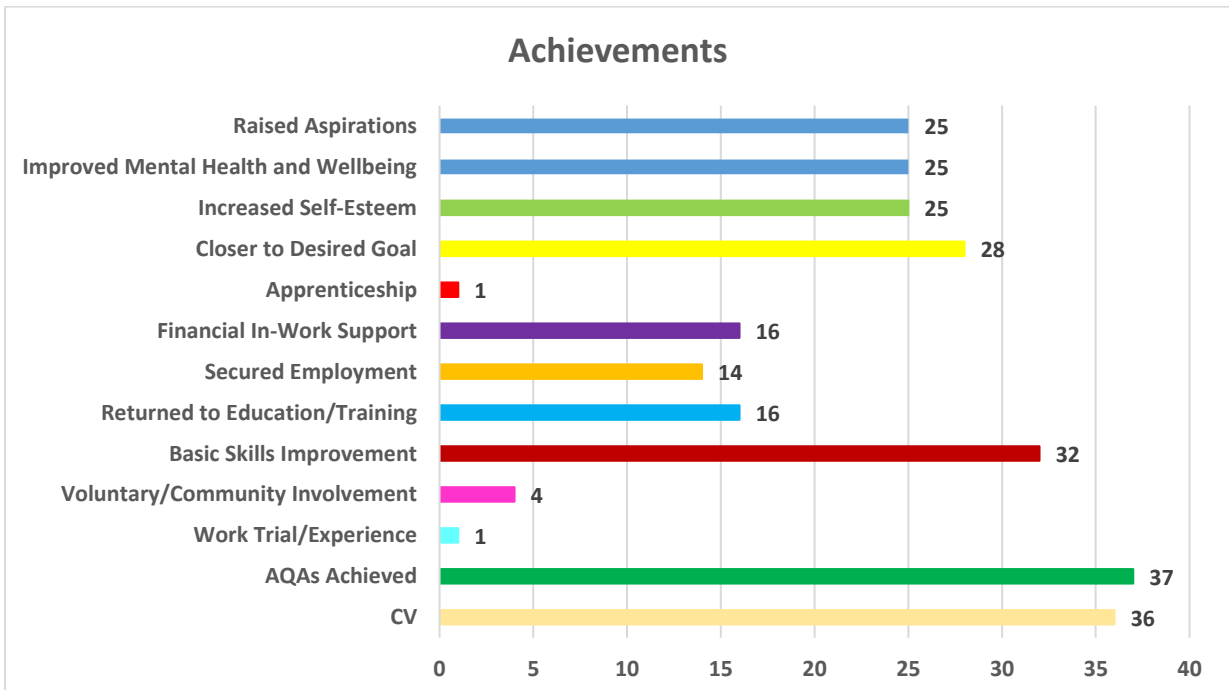
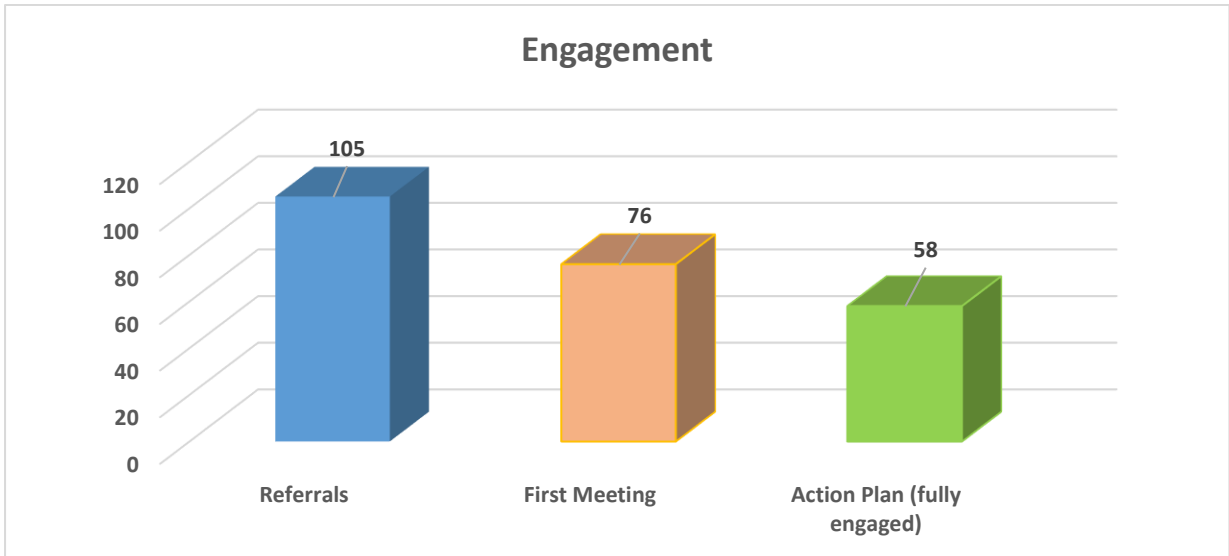
Smiles for Miles celebration and feedback event June 2023

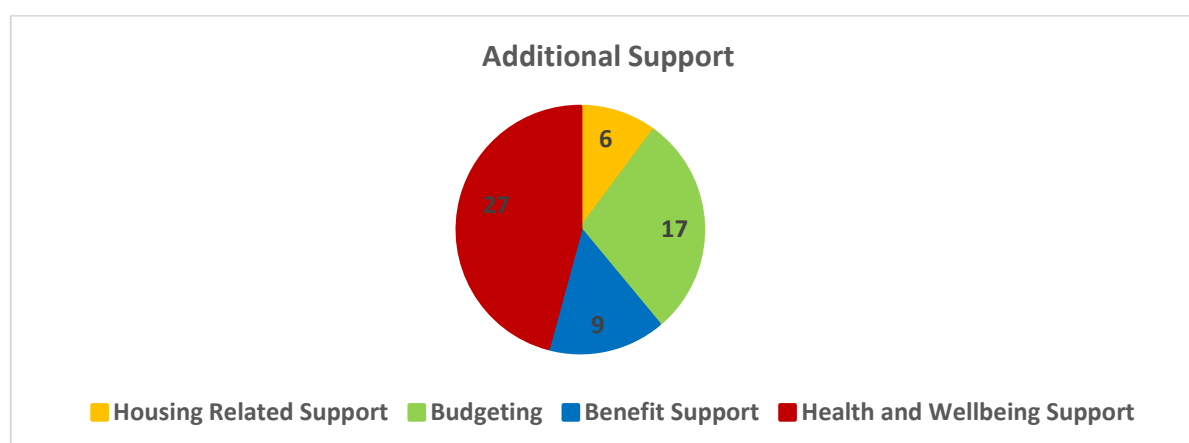
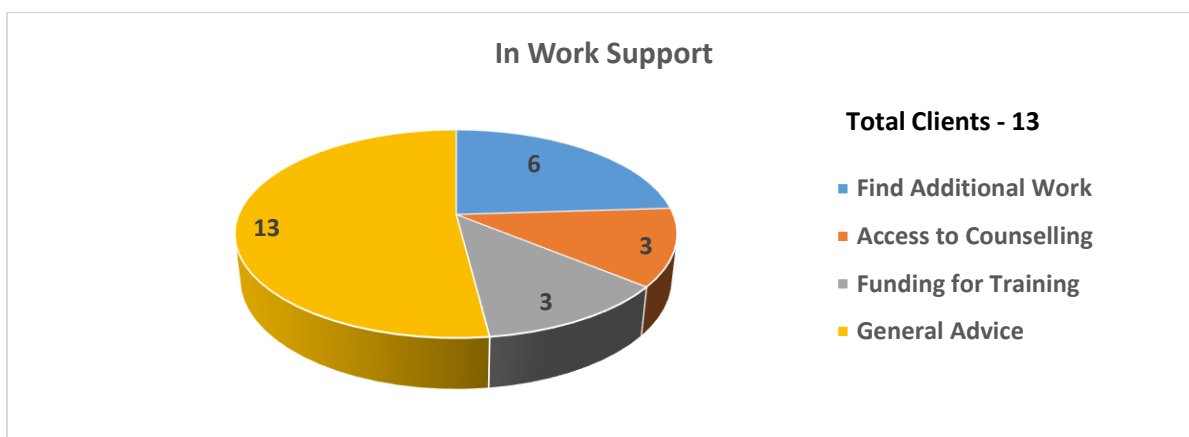


Brighter Futures Service Report

Client achievements

Below is a graph of clients' achievements from 1st April 2023 - 31st March 2024.





What has gone well, what have we learnt and challenges we faced

We achieved Matrix Accreditation!

In October 2023 the team and I, alongside Lisa Rachieru spent time planning for the assessment, which was our first under the new Matrix standard. The assessor and partner agencies who took part in our assessment gave the team and the support we provide excellent feedback. The feedback referred to our holistic and person centred approach and advised this is what our clients need. I am very proud of the teams’ achievements and so grateful to the clients who gave up their time to provide their testimony and to talk about the impact the service has had on them.

“Rush House are dedicated to maintaining the positive ethos and culture of the organisation, through a person centred, impactful service which supports a wide range of participants”
(Aly Jackson, Matrix assessor)

In this reporting period we have learnt a lot and faced challenges on the way. We learnt that stream lining our referral process and adapting monitoring and paperwork to suit the cohort of clients made sense and worked.

The flexibility and person centred approach of the service suits our clients' needs. Our offer of AQA's was invaluable for some and they enhanced their CV, skills and confidence. The 'In Work' support offer has been very beneficial to those in work but struggling to remain there for various reasons. The barrier busting budget, set up to remove financial barriers to Education, Employment and Training (EET), has enabled us to buy work wear, training courses and travel provision to support people on their journey in or on to EET.

Our clients and the team have also faced some challenges. We found there are limited opportunities for the 16-18 year old clients not in education or training and a general lack of opportunities at either end of the age scale, younger and older clients. The challenges could be, lack of work experience, over qualified for roles, personal issues such as mental health and caring duties for parents, or caring for elderly relatives.

We have found since the pandemic there are limited bus routes in some areas of Rotherham, which can limit where clients can travel to work however the reduction in fares has really helped to make travel costs easier to manage.

Consultations, collaborations and connections

The Brighter Futures team have been working with a steering group for some time doing face to face consultations, online surveys and creating client's case studies to highlight their achievements. The members of the steering group all worked on specific AQA units which were created for this piece of work which are: Introduction to Being a Steering Group Member and Effective Communication in Working Together.

We focused on different subjects at each meeting including, barriers to employment, training and education. This consultation highlighted many barriers clients presented with, including, the lack of employability skills, access to travel in our local area and clients' wellbeing. From this consultation, we devised an online survey to ask if clients would like to attend a monthly drop in to work on employability skills. We received 13 responses to our survey, 12 declined the offer. 1 person asked for support with college work and their coach gladly arranged this.

Throughout the year, we have attended many events with the aim of building our links to Employers and opportunities for our clients. These have included:

- Employment Solutions Event
- RNN (Rotherham and North Notts) Business Event Launch
- Rotherham Opportunities College Event
- ESF (European Social Fund) Business and Education Alliance Networking and Celebration Event
- DWP's (Department for Work and Pensions) Youth Event

These events have allowed us to engage with other providers, share information about our services and generate referrals for service.

We have also started to build links with local community groups. Ferham Community Centre and High Street Centre in Rawmarsh have both invited us in to talk about our services to members of the local community and for us to learn more about what they do. Our hope is for us to connect with more community groups so we can sign post our clients to them, to help them establish support in their local community when they exit our service.



Paula Martin Life Skills Manager

Overview

I joined the team in September 2023 and my initial focus was on developing APOYO, taking on the coordinator role for AQA and then taking on responsibility for volunteers.

Cassie Kelly joined the Life Skills team in November 2023 and does a lot of the delivery to our young people. We held a Life Skills planning session in February so we are clear on our priorities and action points in the coming months. We are both looking at funding opportunities to be able to deliver a variety of sessions and activities. We welcomed a Tenancy Skills Coach (Dave Baugh) in March 2024 to support with APOYO.

Key achievements/highlights

APOYO - I have further developed the new APOYO portal to be at a stage where it can be rolled out to more people. A pilot of the new APOYO has been completed and the new portal was launched to Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council staff (current referrers). **I have delivered 15 group or one to one APOYO sessions.**

AQA - I have completed AQA Co-ordinator training. All AQA's have been updated to be more user friendly and include tutor notes for each one. Some new AQA's have been produced – County Lines, Mentoring and Helping Peers, Promoting Involvement – Planning an Activity. Emotional Awareness: Stress, A Healthy Relationship With Technology. I have submitted an AQA for approval on The Tree of Life, Narrative Therapy project in preparation for our **Smiles for Miles 2:0** project delivery. A new list has been produced so that staff can easily see what is available.



Lynne receiving some homebaked buns from Zara, a student who came on placement with us

Placements/volunteering – we have had 3 students on placement either experiencing Rush as a whole or working on specific projects, 1 further student on placement joined us in March. I have refreshed our volunteer documents and applied to renew our quality standard. We have one activities volunteer and are in the process of onboarding one more.

Looking to the future

I am now in the process of inducting our Tenancy Skills Coach to assist with developing a new section of APOYO which is around home ownership and with developing APOYO so that it is more accessible to more people over a broader geographical area. I will be focused on developing our Volunteer programme to meet our strategic objective and ensuring that Rush achieves the VAR (Voluntary Action Rotherham) Kitemark.



A Place of Your Own – Tenancy Training Programme

Overview

Rush continues to deliver its very own pre tenancy training programme which has been a part of Rush for many years. We have brought the programme into the digital age following funding from Rotherham Council but more so due to the demand and need of this training as everyone who is pre tenancy with Rotherham Council is required to complete this course.

Key Achievements

During this past year, the APOYO portal has been developed following further consultations with our young people, current and potential users, which has streamlined the course, to be multiple choice and creates the users own certificate of completion. This has enabled us to reach a much wider audience and to be able us to deliver the course nationwide.

"Honestly this course has helped me so much! I think I'm now ready for my own place and this course has definitely helped me get ready for that. LW"

APOYO referrals 1/4/23 - 31/3/24

Between 1/4/24 and 31/3/24 APOYO received referrals for a total of 352 clients.
177 completed the course giving a completion rate of 50.5%.



Age ranges, 16-17 = 21, 18-30 = 294, 30+ = 37



88% of those who finished
the APOYO
Pre Tenancy training
course said it had
improved their
understanding of the
Rights and Responsibilities
of a tenant.

Looking to the future

Following our successful application to Leeds Building Society Dragons Den, we now have funds available to continue the development of APOYO.

We have just begun working on a language translation feature for APOYO, so it can be delivered to a wider audience for whom English is not their first language. Our conversations with multiple referring partners seems to suggest that this will be the catalyst for APOYO having a unique selling point that will set it aside from other similar courses. We already have interest from a number of local organisations working with asylum seekers and refugees who have said that if we can get this right, it will be of massive benefit to their client cohorts.

We have had some initial engagement with **Leeds Building Society** in regards the development of the 9th section of APOYO which will cover all the essential information a person will need to purchase their own home. Whilst this is in the early days of planning, we have already aptly named this section "A Place That You Own".



AQA Unit Delivery

Rush has been a registered delivery centre for AQA units since 2020.

To date we have developed 41 AQA units. The majority of the units that we developed focus on life skills and complement the work of our services, such as:

- Basic Food Hygiene
- Emotional Wellbeing
- Identifying and Understanding Bills
- Tenancy Rights and Responsibilities

We also have specific AQA's that are used to support our EET (Education, Employment and Training) offer, which include:

- Effective Communication in Working Together
- Employability – Punctuality and Personal Presentation
- Interview Skills

We have created AQA's specifically to support programmes that we run. We created an AQA - ***Building Resilience in Own Life*** to supplement the activity delivered by Roger Cheetham from Survive, Strive, Thrive around overcoming adversity which was part of our 'Rush to Wellness' project funded by SYVRU (South Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit)

We also created an AQA on - ***Introduction to Recycling*** to encourage and support young people to recycle their waste correctly.

Our hope is that completing AQA units gives people a chance to demonstrate learning and work towards their goals. Such as TR who completed '***Employability – Punctuality and Personal Presentation***' and used this to support his application to volunteer with Rotherham Hospice.

183 the number of AQAs we have submitted this year!

40 the number of learners completing AQAs this year!

28 the highest number of AQAs achieved by 1 person!



Smiles for Miles

September 2023 saw the end of our very successful National Lottery funded project with other Rotherham Children Young People and Families Consortium members – Smiles for Miles. Our collective efforts resulted in a network of 3799 customised interventions and activities, benefiting 2497 children and young people across Rotherham.

In June 2023 we hosted a celebration and feedback event with some of the young people we engaged during the 2 year funded project. We used a range of methods to engage those who attended to be able to articulate what Smiles for Miles had meant to them and invited the independent evaluator for the project (Donna Peach) to join us to capture the essence of what made Smiles for Miles so successful for our young people.



Whilst our Smiles for Miles offer was to deliver EET (Education, Employment and Training) support to 16 and 17 year olds across Rotherham, which we successfully did, it became apparent that our strength was the way we collaborated with other partners and adapted to meet client need. We are proud of the way in which we engaged other partner organisations to ensure our young people got the very best from the Smiles for Miles offer. This is acknowledged in the independent report;

The collaboration between RB (Rotherham and Barnsley) Mind and Rush House characterised an approach steeped in understanding that the transition into a counselling relationship should itself be person centred. Thus, they combined to empower young people to engage in a therapeutic process who were unable to envisage themselves doing so. Young people were provided with space to explore sensitive personal experiences that reduced their sense of isolation and empowered them to understand their experiences in a wider context. The nature of that work was exceptional and ground breaking reducing stigma and nurturing a future resilient self. The ability to realise new aspects of self at this stage of mid adolescence can expand perceptions of future potential and ambition.

(Smiles for Miles Final Evaluation Report – Dr Donna Peach)

The young people engaging with our offer gravitated towards the nurturing support of Lynne – this became much more than EET support and led to the development of a funded Girls Group to allow young women to come together and get that much needed peer support. This adaptation has influenced our offer for **Smiles for Miles 2:0**, whereby we will focus on personal development for young women and young men.



Sarah Miller Business & Finance Manager

RUSH HOUSE LTD

**BALANCE SHEET
31 MARCH 2024**

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2024 Total funds £	2023 Total funds £
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	11	29,106	-	29,106	9,278
Cash at bank and in hand		251,833	32,788	284,621	371,518
		<u>280,939</u>	<u>32,788</u>	<u>313,727</u>	<u>380,796</u>
CREDITORS					
Amounts falling due within one year	12	(27,460)	-	(27,460)	(19,169)
		<u>253,479</u>	<u>32,788</u>	<u>286,267</u>	<u>361,627</u>
NET CURRENT ASSETS					
		<u>253,479</u>	<u>32,788</u>	<u>286,267</u>	<u>361,627</u>
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES					
		<u>253,479</u>	<u>32,788</u>	<u>286,267</u>	<u>361,627</u>
ACCRUALS AND DEFERRED INCOME	13	(82,114)	(32,788)	(114,902)	(118,995)
		<u>171,365</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>171,365</u>	<u>242,632</u>
NET ASSETS					
		<u>171,365</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>171,365</u>	<u>242,632</u>
FUNDS					
Unrestricted funds	14			<u>171,365</u>	<u>242,632</u>
TOTAL FUNDS					
				<u>171,365</u>	<u>242,632</u>

Highlights

Life beyond Rotherham – the view our Young People enjoyed on one of their many trips with Endeavour in summer 2023



Rush team member making sure everyone was going in the right direction



Alton Towers trip 2023



Rush receives a visit from Wickersley School & Sports College with a donation of toiletries and £301 for Christmas



L developing her cooking skills with a smile



Lisa and Steve collecting a cash donation and upcycled denim from Maxine at Aspire



The team enjoying the sun on one of our many 'chat 'n' chill' sessions

Rush House Board of Directors 2023 -2024



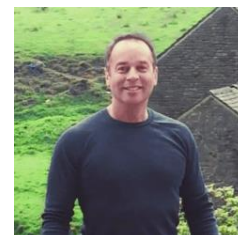
Chair – Nick Knowles

Vice Chair – David Homer



Karen Shaw

Alan Heppenstall



Rose Martin

Secretary – Sarah Miller



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Company limited by guarantee number: 3022267