

Brief – Evaluation project for a youth homelessness prevention service embedded in Croydon further education colleges

1. Summary of Brief

We would like an evaluation of a new homelessness prevention service in Croydon. We will be embedding a Support Worker within the Welfare teams of two local further education colleges. They will provide housing advice and interventions to college students with housing difficulties and at risk of becoming homeless. They will also train and equip the rest of the Welfare Team to give advice themselves.

The evaluator will be involved for a few days during the project set-up, advising on what data we should be collecting and how we will do this. At the 6-month point they will check our data recording is on track. Then at the end of the 2-year project they will analyse the outcomes data and write an evaluation report.

The aims of the evaluation are to:

- Capture and understand the work undertaken by the project
- Help CAYSH identify ways to adjust and improve the project during the pilot period
- Provide a summative account and recommendation for CAYSH at the end of the project
- Create outputs to share best practice and learning as well as recommendations for policy, practice and funding.

2. About CAYSH

CAYSH is a youth homelessness charity. Originating in Croydon, we have been operating for over 40 years and now have services in three London boroughs. We want to give people safer homes and better futures. We have a lot of success helping young people with a range of needs, including experience of traumatic childhoods, housing insecurity and a lack of hope and opportunity in life. In 2025-26 we supported:

- 172 Young People
- 43 people moving on to independence
- 22 people into work
- 18 people into education
- Helped 100% of the people supported through our Floating Support team to keep their homes

CAYSH also has a Community Interest Company (CIC) which delivers concierge services for supported accommodation. Working mostly during the night-time, they

keep buildings and vulnerable people safe in their homes. This complements the work of the charity very well, as the charity provides supported accommodation. The CIC's customers include housing associations and other providers of supported accommodation. All surpluses made by the CIC are given to the charity. In 2025-26 we:

- Prevented 253 incidents from occurring
- Prevented 63 call-outs to emergency services

Our latest Annual report can be found on our website: www.caysh.org

3. Project outline

Starting in January 2027, CAYSH will deliver a two-year pilot homelessness prevention project in partnership with two further education colleges in Croydon. The project responds to a gap in existing college welfare provision: although welfare and safeguarding teams are often among the first to become aware that a student is experiencing housing difficulties, they may not have the specialist knowledge needed to prevent those difficulties from escalating into homelessness.

A CAYSH Advice & Support Officer (ASO) will be embedded within the Welfare and Safeguarding teams of both colleges. The ASO will provide accessible, timely support to students experiencing housing insecurity or at risk of homelessness. Support will include housing advice, advocacy, help to understand their rights and options, and practical interventions such as liaising with landlords. All support will be recorded on CAYSH's recording system, In-Form.

Alongside direct work with students, the ASO will build the knowledge, skills and confidence of college Welfare Teams. This will include training, guidance and opportunities for staff to learn through joint working. The aim is for welfare teams to identify housing risks earlier and respond more effectively.

The project is based on the principle that preventing homelessness is less disruptive and traumatic for young people, as well as less costly than responding after a crisis has occurred. This prevention principle is a major theme of the government's National Homelessness Strategy. By co-locating within a familiar and trusted educational setting, the project aims to identify and deal with housing situations at an early stage.

As a test-and-learn pilot, the project will also generate evidence about how housing insecurity presents among further education students, which features of our project are most effective, and whether this cross-sector model could be replicated by other colleges, local authorities and homelessness organisations.

4. The evaluation

CAYSH is seeking an independent external evaluator to assess the design, delivery, outcomes and wider learning from this two-year pilot. As this is an innovative prevention project, the evaluation must address the inherent challenge of demonstrating what might have happened to young people without the intervention. It should therefore combine robust quantitative evidence with qualitative feedback from young people, college staff and other relevant stakeholders.

We would expect the evaluation to include (but not necessarily be limited to):

- Providing input on developing the theory of change and monitoring framework
- Analysis of data from project monitoring outputs
- Desk review of relevant research and other outputs (policy documents etc) relevant to the project
- Qualitative research with stakeholders

We are keen to ensure that the evaluator works alongside the project across the whole pilot period, with input weighted towards:

Project mobilisation

The input of the evaluator will be key during this phase. We would expect the delivery of a small number of consultancy days to help CAYSH develop a clear Theory of Change and proportionate evaluation framework. This will include advising on outcome measures, data points, baseline information, feedback questions and data-collection processes. Considerations include evidencing housing risk, the contribution made by the intervention, who the project worked well for, where there were barriers to outcomes, the impact of training on college welfare teams. We are open to considering the importance of tracking education outcomes as well.

Review of monitoring data

Approximately six months after delivery begins, the evaluator will undertake a light-touch review to confirm that monitoring arrangements are working effectively, identify gaps or data-quality issues, and recommend any necessary adjustments.

End of year one report

An end of year one report will need to provide analysis of monitoring data, qualitative data gathered and any other data from the project (for example desk research findings). The report will be an internal output designed to shape the remainder of the project, support staff and leaders to share learning from year one, and start to build the evidence for the final evaluation report.

Final report

The evaluator's largest contribution will take place at the end of the project. They will analyse the quantitative and qualitative evidence and produce an accessible final report covering what the project achieved, implementation challenges, lessons learned, recommendations for future delivery and implications for the wider education and homelessness sectors. We would also like the report to consider cost-effectiveness, including potential public-service savings arising from homelessness prevention.

5. Budget

CAYSH's budget is £10,000 - £12,000 +VAT for this project.

6. Submitting a proposal and quote

Proposals should include:

- Methodology
- Risks and ethical considerations
- Relevant experience of consultant or team including links to reports (or reports can be sent by email if they are not published)
- Proposed timetable
- Budget including day rates and indicative allocation of days to different stages of the work expenses and any other relevant explanation/breakdown of the quote. VAT, if applicable should be itemised separately.

The method statement should cover your approach to the evaluation, examples of the types of data you are likely to require, how you will collaborate with CAYSH and your approach to reporting and ensuring reports are useful and impactful.

Proposals should be no more than six sides. You may append team CVs if you wish.

Send quotations to: info@caysh.org , titled 'F.A.O. Chris Deacon' by 13/11/2026.

7. Assessing proposals and quotes

We will consider the quality of your proposal and value for money. From this, we will may interview a small number of applicants or commission directly from the written proposals. The initiation meeting for the project would be in December 2026.