

Project Flourish: pilot findings and opportunities for expansion

Creating better routes into sustainable employment for young people experiencing homelessness

Programme data correct to 26 July 2026

By Lizzie Francis, Senior Impact and Partnerships Consultant, and Nicholas Connolly, CEO, EveryYouth

What is Project Flourish?

Project Flourish is a supported employment pathway for young people experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness. Its aim is to provide meaningful permanent employment, either full or part-time, as well as access to tailored support for their development, and includes a bursary to support them to move into independent living.

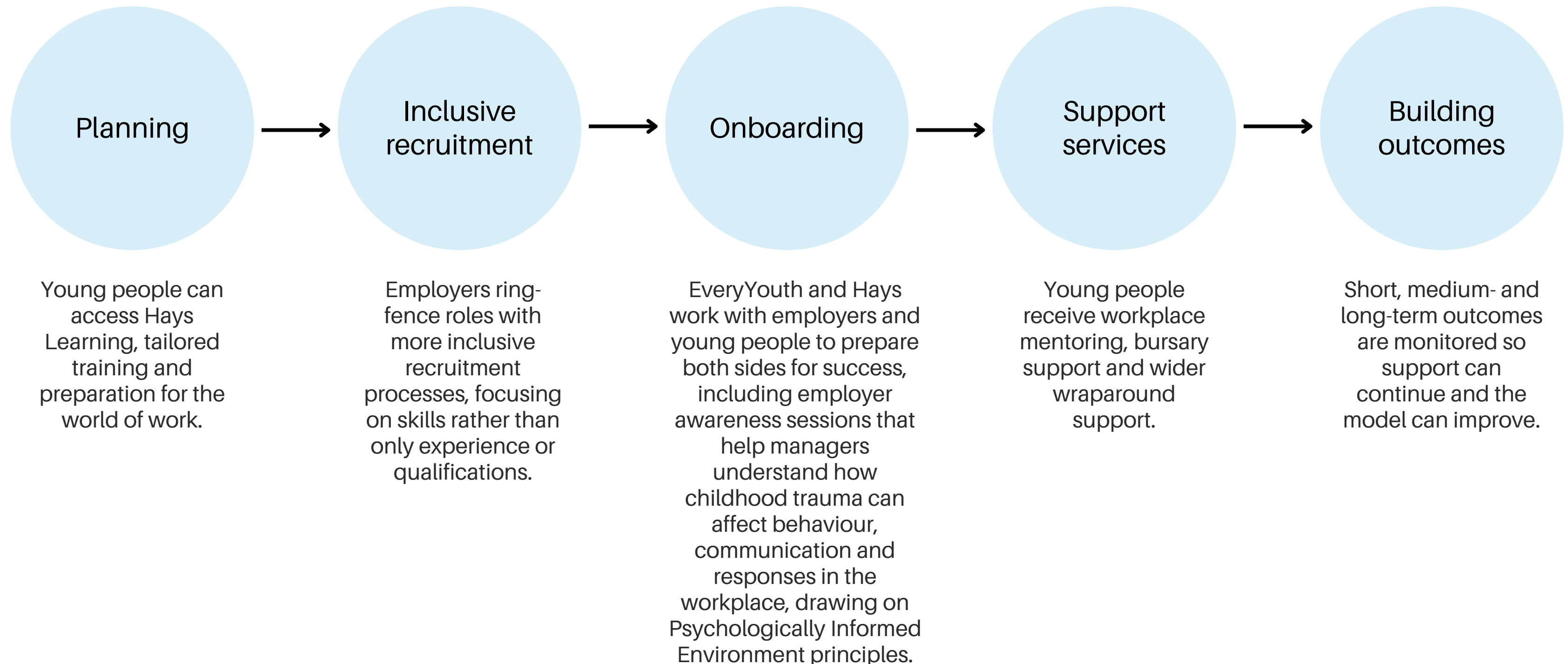
Created in collaboration with Hays, a globally recognised recruitment and workforce solutions provider, the programme combines EveryYouth's homelessness network with Hays' recruitment expertise and employer relationships. The programme is free to participating young people and employers, with Hays providing recruitment expertise and employer support pro bono, as well as funding the Super Boost bursary.

The model turns the traditional approach to employment on its head. While supply-side programmes can help young people experiencing homelessness build skills, confidence and job-readiness, this does not necessarily translate into a realistic employment opportunity. Project Flourish starts with the employer instead: we create real, ring-fenced employment opportunities first, then identify and support young people who could succeed in those roles. Young people can come through existing employability or homelessness services, creating a direct and supported route from homelessness into sustainable employment.

Because getting a job is only the start.

Sustained employment depends on the practical, relational and financial support around a young person.

A Supported Employment Pathway



Preparing Employers to Support Young People

As part of Project Flourish, Employers are required to review their recruitment processes, agree to provide a workplace mentor, attend regular stakeholder meetings and attend a Psychologically Informed Environment (PIE) Awareness session.

Delivered by a Clinical Psychologist, the sessions help employers understand how homelessness, trauma and instability can affect confidence, communication, attendance and early experiences of work.

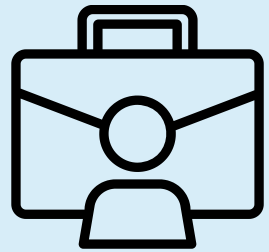
Learning the PIE principles underpins an employer's commitment to providing a fully inclusive and supportive workplace for young people at risk of homelessness.

Some of the organisations engaged with Project Flourish:

IKEA, Yorkshire Housing Association, Specsavers, Andras Hotels, University Hospitals Birmingham and Amazon.

Building the Employment Pipeline

Project Flourish creates supported routes into work by engaging employers, ringfencing opportunities which pay a living wage, have part-time flexibility if required and are in an easily accessible location. The employer agrees to provide constructive feedback whatever the outcome of the interview. The programme is building a pipeline of employers willing to adapt recruitment and workplace practices so that young people at risk of homelessness can compete on a fairer basis.



62 YP successfully placed during Flourish's pilot phase

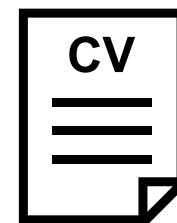


21 different employers across many sectors



Partnerships

Built links with **Crisis' DWP/DLUHC-backed Homelessness Alliance** and **Homewards, The Royal Foundation's** initiative to help end homelessness, strengthening employer engagement and wider support around young people.



Building work readiness

1,700+ users reached through Hays' Learning Management System, helping young people build skills, strengthen their CVs and become work-ready.

What Flourish Needs To Move From Pilot To Scale



More Local Delivery Partners

Connections to local homelessness, youth and employability organisations that can identify and support young people.



Employer Connections

Support reaching local employers willing to create ring-fenced opportunities and adapt recruitment where needed.



Strategic Backing

Strategic backing and convening support to help position Flourish within the local employment landscape.

Sustaining Work Beyond the Start Date

For young people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, six-month sustainment is a meaningful milestone.

90%

employed for 6 months or
longer

72%

passed probation

71%

of young people who passed
probation have moved into
independent living

What Project Flourish is Showing

The data points to a simple but important learning: sustained employment requires both inclusive employers and practical stability around the young person.

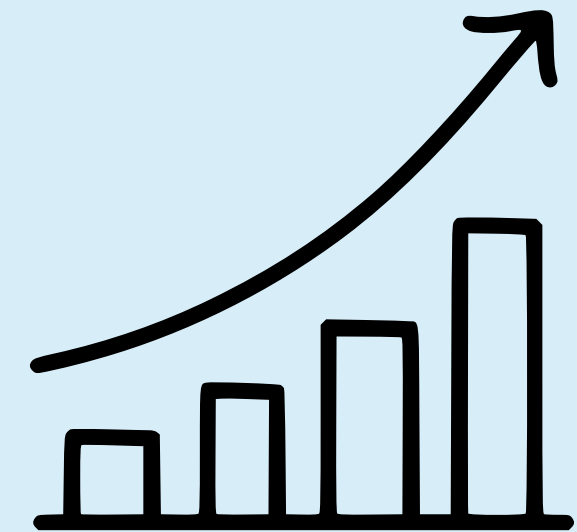
Access to vacancies isn't enough

Young people need support through recruitment, onboarding and the early months of work.



Flexible funding protects progress

Support with rent, furniture, food, clothing and travel can prevent practical instability from disrupting employment



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Employer Readiness Matters

Flourish helps young people experiencing homelessness overcome barriers to securing and sustaining good-quality employment through an individualised approach. This includes preparing both the young person and the employer, removing practical and financial barriers through flexible funding and support such as FinWELL financial education, and creating opportunities where young people do not have to compete against better-supported and better-qualified peers. Support continues beyond the point of employment, recognising that young people may still need help to establish themselves in work and move towards independent living.

Flexible Funding Protects Progress

Each young person supported through Flourish is allocated £2,050 in Super Boost funding to help remove practical and financial barriers to work. More than £36,000 has already been disbursed directly to young people, with a further £63,104 allocated and available to be drawn down as needed.

£36,912

disbursed directly to
young people

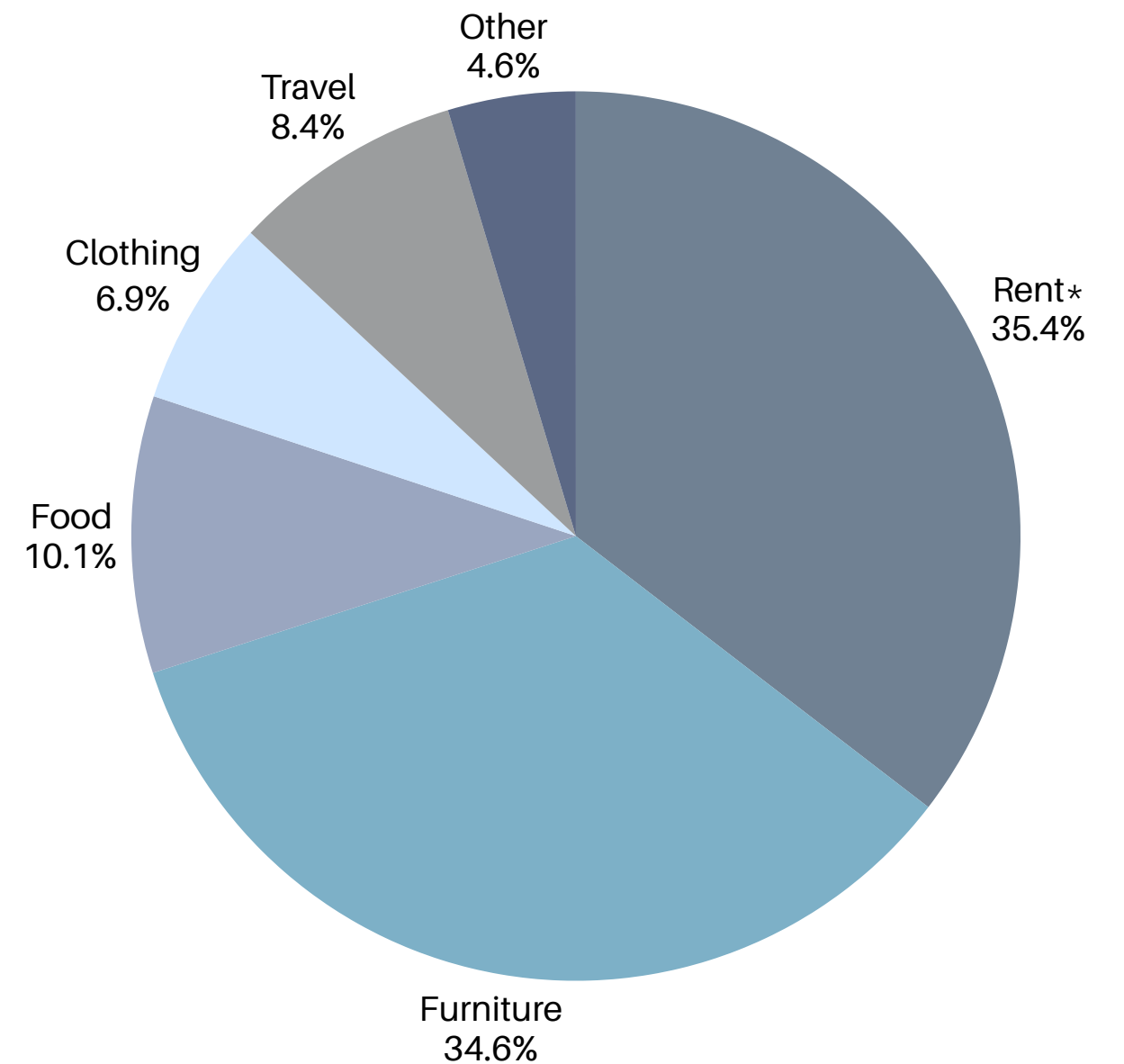
125

additional young
people funding has
been secured for

£2,050

maximum Boost
allowance
provided by Hays

Rent* and furniture account for around two-thirds of direct Super Boost support, linking employment sustainment and housing instability and basic living conditions.



* Rent subsidy to facilitate move-on into sustainable independent homes.

What Makes Flourish Different

01 A focus on homelessness

Flourish reaches young people through homelessness services they already trust.

02 Opportunities shaped with employers

Flourish creates ringfenced vacancies, then matches young people to the roles.

03 Inclusive recruitment

Employers adapt recruitment and prepare to support young people in the workplace.

04 Support after starting work

Continued contact with the young person and employer helps address difficulties early.

05 Flexible financial support

A bursary helps with practical barriers such as travel, food, clothing and housing costs.

06 Work and independent living

Employment support sits alongside the young person's wider housing and support needs.

For Funders and Commissioners

Young people experiencing homelessness face significant barriers to entering and sustaining employment, with substantial economic and social costs when these challenges go unaddressed. Project Flourish offers a supported route into employment and independent living, combining employer partnerships, tailored support and flexible financial assistance. The pilot has already generated an estimated £2.28 million in social value, demonstrating the potential of this approach as the programme expands.

The Case for Investment

£29,000

Estimated lifetime cost to government associated with one year spent in NEET.¹

~£34,700

Estimated annual economic and social cost per young person experiencing homelessness.²

£2.28m

Estimated social value generated through Project Flourish to date.

¹ Department for Work and Pensions (2026), Young People and Work: interim report, Table 5. Estimated lifetime cost to government associated with one year spent NEET.

² Centrepont (2023), Human Costs and Lost Potential: The Real Cost of Youth Homelessness. Original estimate of £27,347 in 2021/22 prices, adjusted using ONS Consumer Prices Index (CPI) to August 2026. Approximate inflation-adjusted equivalent, not a revised economic cost estimate.

³ Social value calculated using Hay's Social Value Portal's TOMs Framework, based on recorded Project Flourish activity across employment, skills development, employer engagement and financial support. This is an estimated social value, not a direct financial saving.

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