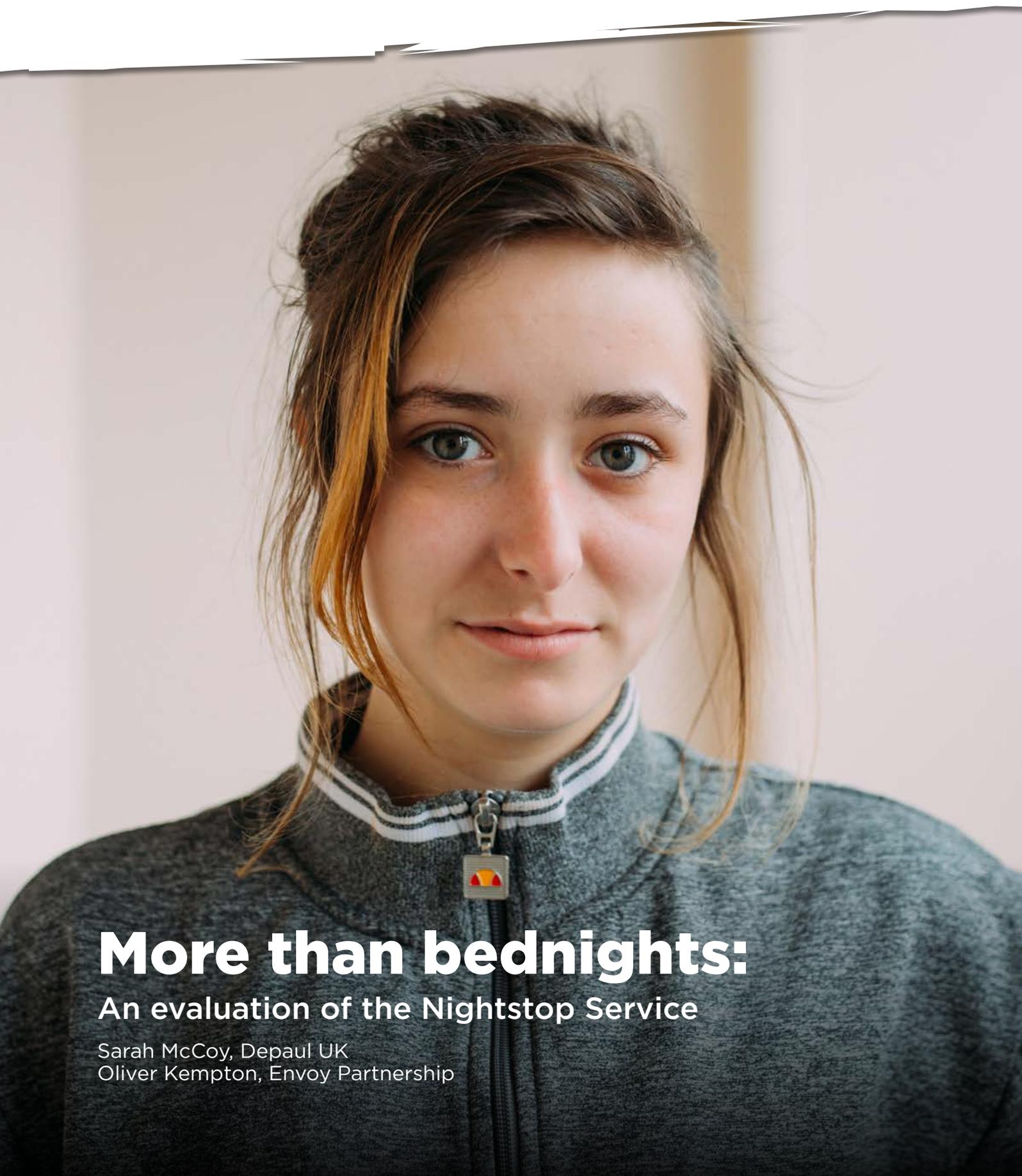


# NIGHTSTOP

Preventing homelessness through community hosting



## More than bednights:

An evaluation of the Nightstop Service

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Nightstop is a same-night emergency accommodation service that links young people in crisis with trained volunteer hosts who accommodate them in their own home. Depaul UK oversees the network of Nightstop services, which by the end of 2017 included 31 Nightstops across the UK.<sup>1</sup> In 2017, the Nightstop network in the UK covered 129 local authorities, placing 1,388 young people with a host for a total of 10,892 nights.

This report details the findings of an evaluation of the Nightstop service, conducted by Depaul UK in conjunction with Envoy Partnership in the second half of 2017. The evaluation aimed to understand how the Nightstop model is applied in practice, to understand the difference that Nightstop makes to young people and hosts involved in the project, and to examine the social value created by the project. It drew on qualitative interviews and online surveys with young people who use the service, volunteer hosts, Nightstop staff, and referring agencies.

The main evaluation findings are detailed below:

- 1 The impact on young people who use the service is significant. In the short term, Nightstop leads to the following outcomes for service users:
  - **Reduced risk of harm:** Many young people using the service had previously been rough-sleeping and/or at risk of domestic abuse
  - **Improved sleep:** Young people using Nightstop have the opportunity to get significantly improved sleep, as the host's accommodation is safe and secure. This can give them the energy and mental capacity to make positive changes to their lives, and to have the resilience to cope with the difficulties they face
  - **Improved personal care:** Young people are given an opportunity to shower and to wash their clothes. Some had previously been staying in volatile environments where binge-drinking and drug-taking were common
  - **Ability to eat healthily:** Young people are often better fed at the hosts' houses than they would otherwise be, and the Nightstop services often provide food as well. For some young people, eating a meal together as a family was a new experience
  - **Ability to stay warm and dry:** For those who had been sleeping rough or on public transport, having somewhere warm and dry to sleep was considered hugely important.
- 2 Nightstop also leads to changes in service users' feelings and attitudes:
  - **Increased sense of choice and control:** Many young people were trapped in difficult situations before accessing Nightstop, for example relying on friends or in a potentially violent relationship. Nightstop gives people an alternative – a way to escape their circumstances and take more control of their lives

<sup>1</sup> Nightstop also includes a service in Ontario, Canada. However, this service is not included in this evaluation.

### Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all those who generously gave their time and insights to help create this research. In particular we would like to thank the young people, volunteers and staff from various Nightstop services who contributed to this research. We would also like to thank the Garfield Weston Foundation for their continued support for Nightstop UK.



- **Being treated with respect and dignity:** Nightstop can make young people feel a part of society, rather than being defined by their living situation
  - **Increased self-esteem and sense of self-worth:** Many young people's experiences had led them to have quite negative attitudes towards themselves by the time they accessed Nightstop. The experience of being well treated through the Nightstop service made them feel more valued, and led to them valuing themselves more
  - **Increased faith in others:** Being treated well gave many young people a more positive feeling about the world and the people in it
  - **Increased optimism about the future, and motivation to make positive changes:** The increase in self-esteem and faith in others experienced by young people using Nightstop can also lead to them feeling more positive about the future, and may lead them to consider options that they would not have done previously
- 3 The interviews with young people who had used Nightstop some time in the past highlighted a number of potential longer-term outcomes for users of the service:
- **Social and emotional capabilities:** The experience of staying with different people, adapting to different social situations, travelling to different areas and generally having to leave their comfort zone can increase the social and emotional capabilities of many Nightstop users
  - **Practical skills and knowledge:** Many young people gain skill such as budgeting, cooking, and basic domestic skills through Nightstop
  - **Engagement with education, employment and training:** Often Nightstop helps young people with their education or work, for example if having a stable place to stay enabled them to focus better on work or continue with their studies
  - **Relationships:** Often, those who use Nightstop see their relationships with family members (particularly parents) improve, as the service gives them "time out" to help diffuse arguments
  - **Health (physical and mental):** Those who used Nightstop for a prolonged length of time felt the benefits of eating healthily and resting well on their physical health, particularly reduced fatigue and stabilised body weight. The service can also lead to reduced anxiety and depression.
  - **Improved access to secure accommodation:** The longer-term impact of Nightstop on young people's housing situation is difficult to judge. However, the qualitative research showed that, at least in some instances, the work of Nightstop can help young people access more secure accommodation.
- 4 The evaluation also looked at the social value created by Nightstop. A full Social Return on Investment model was not possible due to the challenges of collecting data from those who have used Nightstop, particularly those who had used Nightstop some time in the past. However, three hypothetical case studies were developed for the report, that look in more depth at the Social Value created when Nightstop: 1) supports a Nightstop user to improve their mental health, 2) supports a Nightstop user into employment, and 3) helps improve a Nightstop user's physical safety.

The case studies show that:

- If Nightstop can help an individual avoid depression and/or anxiety, then Nightstop can claim credit for resource savings of £530 per year for the NHS and £50 per year to local authorities, and social value to the young person of more than £1,700.
- If Nightstop supports a client into long-term employment, it creates social value of more than £700 per year for the young person, and resource savings of around £4,700 for the Government
- For each person that Nightstop supports to improve their physical safety, Nightstop can take credit for resource savings of nearly £1,500 for the Government and social value for the individual of £4,600.<sup>2</sup>

Using data collected from the surveys and looking specifically at the outcomes "mental health" and "physical safety", the evaluation suggests that around £4million of social value was directly attributable to the Nightstop Network in 2017.

- 5 While Nightstop hosts vary in age, gender, and household situation, the typical Nightstop host is an older woman living with their partner or alone. Volunteer hosts typically chose to take part because they wanted to "feel useful" or because they felt guilty about having a spare room sitting empty. There were also smaller numbers who had experience of working in the homeless sector or who had had personal experience of homelessness. Hosts also gain some benefits from Nightstop, particularly knowing more about the challenges facing young people, and feeling more part of their community.
- 6 Users of the Nightstop service had come from a range of housing situations. Some were living with family but were at risk of domestic abuse. Some had been staying with friends, often on a night-by-night basis. Others had been sleeping on the streets, in a park, or on public transport or public buildings. Around one third of Nightstop users use the service for just one night, around a third between one and 15 nights, and the final third are longer-term users, using the service for more than 15 nights.
- 7 There is significant variation between the Nightstop services
- The newest service involved in the evaluation was under one year old, whereas several had been running for over a decade
  - While most services receive between one and two referrals a week, the largest receives between 11 and 20
  - Some Nightstops limited the time a young person could stay with a host to three weeks; others placed no limit on this
  - Most services provided additional support alongside placing young people with a host; the most common were signposting, advice and information, and a chaperone service to help young people find their way to hosts' houses

<sup>2</sup> The actual value created is significantly higher, but Nightstop cannot take all of the "credit" for the changes that take place as other factors will also contribute to the creation of value.

## Recommendations

Finally, the report makes a number of recommendations for both service delivery, and for data collection and evaluation:

- Recommendations for service delivery
  - Increasing the number and variety of hosts
  - Making some adjustments to the host application process
  - Ensuring accurate information is shared between referring agencies, hosts, and young people
- Recommendations for data collection and evaluation
  - Improved central monitoring of data
  - Improved consent for information sharing

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## ABOUT DEPAUL UK AND NIGHTSTOP

Depaul UK was formed in 1989 to respond to the needs of the growing numbers of vulnerable young people sleeping rough on the streets of London. Part of the Depaul Group, which works with homeless people in Ireland, Slovakia, Ukraine, the USA, Croatia and France, Depaul UK now supports around 3,700 people a year with an interlinked family of projects ranging from emergency accommodation through to longer-term supported housing and paths to skills, training and employment.

Depaul believes that no young person should ever have to sleep in an unsafe place. To prevent this from happening, it leads Nightstop – a same-night emergency accommodation service that links young people in crisis with trained volunteer hosts who accommodate them in their own home. Depaul UK runs Nightstop UK, which oversees the work of a network of Nightstop services.

At the end of 2017, this Nightstop Network included 31 Nightstops across the UK and our first international service in Ontario, Canada<sup>1</sup>. Four of these Nightstops were managed by Depaul itself and the others by a diverse mix of community organisations, local authorities and charities.

Figure 1 shows how the Nightstop service works:

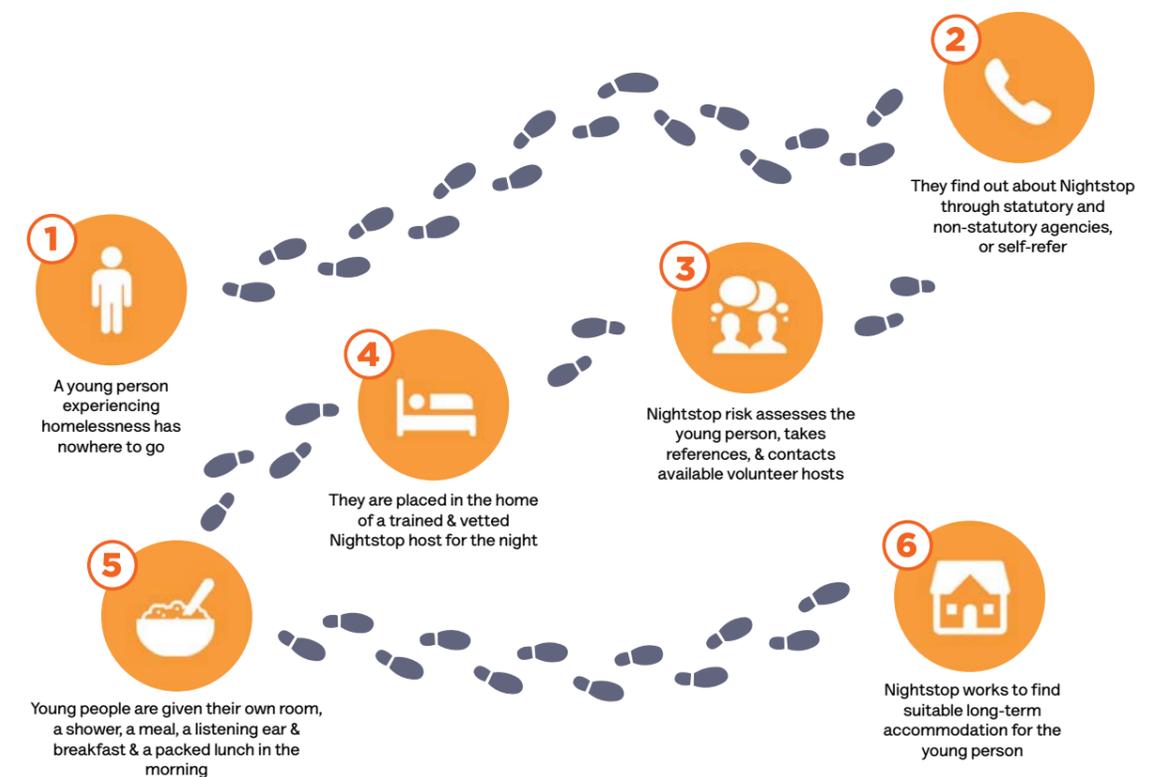


Figure 1: The Nightstop process

<sup>1</sup> This evaluation is based on only our UK services, and does not include any international data sets.

For the safety of volunteer hosts and to ensure young people are getting the appropriate level of support, Nightstop is only available to young people who are classified as “low risk”. To ensure only low risk young people are accommodated, references are sought for each young person referred to the service. In addition, a full risk assessment is undertaken by Nightstop staff. If unsatisfactory references are received, or the risk assessment indicates the young person could pose a risk to themselves or a host, they are not given a place to stay through the Nightstop service. In these cases, Nightstop will seek to find alternative emergency accommodation for the young person.

Nightstop hosts are fully trained and vetted before being accepted onto the programme. This includes an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check and a health and safety check of the homes in which young people will be accommodated. Volunteers are trained on a range of topics that include safeguarding, professional boundaries, and how to respond to a range of practical scenarios.

Young people are placed with Nightstop hosts on a night-by-night basis. This means that if a young person requires accommodation for more than one night, they may be moved to a different host, depending on availability. In some cases, hosts support the same young person for longer periods of time. However, while a young person is staying with a Nightstop host, local Nightstops work to find them more permanent accommodation, so a stay of longer than three weeks should not be necessary.

### Nightstop activity in 2017

In 2017, active Nightstops in the UK covered 129 local authorities. Across the Nightstop Network, 1,388 young people were placed with a host. These young people were given a safe place to stay for a total of 10,892 nights<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> This refers to the number of bednights in the UK alone in 2017, and does not include Nightstop in Canada.

## OUR EVALUATION

### Evaluation objectives

In the summer of 2017, Depaul UK began a formal evaluation of the Nightstop service with the support of an independent evaluation consultancy, Envoy Partnership<sup>3</sup>. The objectives of the evaluation were to:

- Understand more about how the Nightstop model is applied in practice
- Understand more about the difference the service makes to young people and hosts beyond providing bed-nights
- Start to understand the social value of the Nightstop model, drawing on the Social Return on Investment (SROI) methodology where appropriate<sup>4</sup>

### Challenges of evaluating the Nightstop service

In attempting to evaluate the Nightstop service, we faced several challenges:

- Dispersed management of services

As described above, while Depaul UK lead and develop the Nightstop Network through Nightstop UK, organisations deliver and manage the service locally. Coordinating an evaluation of the national service, therefore, involved working with more than 20 independent managers across the UK, which was both time and resource intensive.

- Incomplete/inconsistent data collected between Nightstops

So that they can monitor their work, Nightstop UK hosts a central database for use by individual Nightstops. At the time of writing, 14 Nightstops used this database and the remainder used their own, independent systems. While useful for gathering basic statistics, the Nightstop UK database is cumbersome and difficult to navigate. The data that can be exported from the system is also very limited. For these reasons, use of the database is very inconsistent between Nightstops, which limits the reliability of the data.

Furthermore, Nightstops that do not use the database have very different approaches to monitoring. As their data systems are private and the data subject to data protection rules, there is no way for Nightstop UK to compile data on their activity directly.

These factors limited the data available for the evaluation.

<sup>3</sup> Envoy Partnership is a social impact evaluation consultancy. For more details, see their website: <https://envoypartnership.com/>

<sup>4</sup> For more information, see the SROI guide: <http://www.socialvalueuk.org/resources/sroi-guide/>

- Difficult to contact/re-contact young people

To evaluate Nightstop effectively, it was essential to involve young people who had experience of using the service. In particular, we were keen to involve young people who had used the service some time ago to understand the long-term impact it had had on their lives.

Because Nightstop provides emergency accommodation, young people tend to use the service on a very short-term basis and then disengage. Re-contacting them for involvement in evaluation activities is difficult because:

- Data protection law dictates that service users’ contact details cannot be used for research purposes unless they have given their informed consent. A number of Nightstops had not sought consent to share their data with Nightstop UK, which limited the number of young people we could contact.
- Young people – particularly those who are living chaotic lives – change their addresses and phone numbers frequently. This means a large proportion of those who had given their permission to be contacted were also uncontactable.
- Young people who use Nightstop but then successfully move on to more stable accommodation may not want to be reminded of a difficult time in their lives when they were facing homelessness. As such, young people’s willingness to be involved in the evaluation was likely to be low.

### Evaluation methodology

Social Return on Investment (SROI) is a standardised approach to measuring “extra-financial” value (e.g. social and environmental) relative to the resources invested in a project or intervention. Undertaking a full SROI analysis involves the following stages:

- 1 Establishing scope and identifying key stakeholders
- 2 Mapping outcomes
- 3 Evidencing outcomes and giving them a value
- 4 Establishing impact
- 5 Calculating the SROI
- 6 Reporting, using and embedding

Full SROI analyses require access to considerable and accurate data about an intervention and its impact. Largely due to the challenges outlined above, we expected the data available for this evaluation to be fairly limited. As such, the decision was made not to follow the SROI methodology precisely but to draw on it where appropriate to provide Depaul UK with:

- An overview of the difference Nightstop makes to its key stakeholders (young people and hosts)
- An estimation of the prevalence of these outcomes (i.e. the proportion of each stakeholder group who experience each form of change)
- An indication of the “extra-financial” value created by the Nightstop service

- The evaluation involved the following:
  - Qualitative semi-structured interviews with young people, hosts and referring agencies
  - Three online surveys (one for young people, one for hosts and one for service managers)
  - Full data analysis, including outcome evaluation through desk research

### Qualitative interviews

In July and August 2017, semi-structured interviews were undertaken across five Nightstop services with young people, hosts, representatives from referring agencies and Nightstop staff. Effort was made to ensure that a diverse mix of Nightstops were involved in this phase of the research in terms of their size, type of organisation, geographic location and length of time they had been in operation. Two of the four Depaul-delivered Nightstops were involved in this phase.

Table 1 shows the sites that were involved and the number of interviews that were undertaken in each.

Nightstop	No. of interviews with young people	No. of interviews with hosts	No. of interviews with referring agencies
Nightstop London (Depaul managed)	3	1	1
Nightstop South Yorkshire (Depaul managed)	3	4	3
Nightstop Black Country	6	2	1
Nightstop SASH (North and East Yorkshire)	6	2	1
Nightstop Bristol	6	3	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>6</b>

Table 1: Number of interviews undertaken at each participating Nightstop

All interviews focused on stakeholders’ experience of using the Nightstop service, the difference it had made to them, and areas in which they considered improvements could be made. For full topic guides see Appendices A-C.

### Managers' online survey

An online survey was sent to all Nightstop managers on 11 December 2017. This focused largely on how each service was delivered, the scale of its activity and how it was funded. For the full questionnaire, see Appendix D. Twenty-one Nightstop managers had completed the survey by the time it was closed on 17 January 2018.

### Hosts' online survey

An online survey was sent to Nightstop hosts via service managers on 11 December 2017. By the time it was closed on 17 January 2018, the survey had been completed by 141 hosts from 21 Nightstops<sup>5</sup>. Table 2 shows at which Nightstop respondents hosted.

The full questionnaire for the hosts' survey can be found at Appendix D.

### Young people's online survey

Following discussions with several Nightstop managers, it was agreed that the most effective way to contact young people who were no longer engaged with the Nightstop service would be by text message. This way, young people would not feel pressured to contribute to the evaluation (a text message is easy to ignore), but if they wished to, they could do so at a time and place convenient for them. Three hundred and three young people who had used Nightstop were sent a link to the survey between 8 December 2017 and 17 January 2018.

To encourage young people to complete the survey, the young people were offered a guaranteed £3 voucher for Costa Coffee. Their mobile phone was redirected directly to the voucher once the completed survey was submitted. In addition, young people were emailed their voucher so they could use it at a later date (if they provided a valid email address).

In total 35 young people completed the survey, which represented a 12% response rate.

Overall, 27 Nightstops were involved in the evaluation through the qualitative research, service managers' survey, hosts' survey and young people's survey.

Nightstop	No. of respondents
North East & Cumbria	27
Gloucestershire	18
Black Country	13
London	11
Hertfordshire	10
Sussex	10
Leeds	9
South Yorkshire	9
Nottingham	7
North West	5
Redditch	5
Bath	3
Edinburgh	3
Birmingham	1
Bristol	1
Cheshire	1
New Forest	1
Oldham	1
Somerset Coast	1
Ynys Môn	1
Don't know	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>141</b>

Table 2: No. hosts responding to survey, by Nightstop service

<sup>5</sup> Nightstop North East and Nightstop Cumbria are shown together in Table 2.



## EVALUATION FINDINGS

### Nightstop services in practice

At the end of 2017 the Nightstop Network consisted of 31 Nightstops working across the UK. While the service provided by each of the Nightstops is standardised as much as possible, because of their size and management structure there is inevitably some variation. In this section of the report we draw on the findings from the service managers' online survey (completed in relation to 21 Nightstops) and hosts' survey to show how delivery of the Nightstop model differs across the Network.

#### Length of time in operation

The Nightstop service as a whole has been in operation for 31 years. As shown in Chart 1, the services about which information was provided were likely to have been in operation for more than five years, with nine of the 21 launched more than 10 years ago. There were very few services involved in the evaluation that were less than two years old. However, at the time of writing at least three more Nightstops were being developed for a planned launch in 2018.

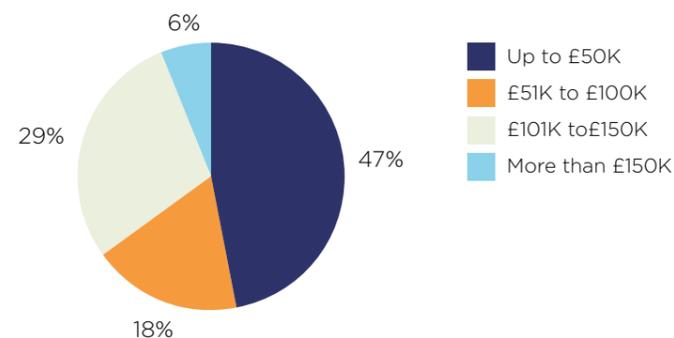


Base: All respondents to service managers' survey (21)

Chart 1: Length of time Nightstops had been in operation

#### Funding

As an indicator of service size, managers were asked to provide their annual budget for 2017. Chart 2 shows that almost half (47%) of Nightstop services involved in this part of the evaluation operated on a budget of less than £50,000 a year. While some had considerably larger budgets than this, only one had more than £150,000 available in 2017.



Base: All respondents to service managers' survey who provided budget information (17)

Chart 2: Annual budget for Nightstops

The data showed no clear pattern regarding which services had higher or lower budgets. For example, those with small budgets were equally likely to be operating in urban and rural areas, and the length of time services had been in operation appeared to have little effect. It is likely that service budget is dependent on local demand for the service, and on opportunities for local funding. It is worth noting that the figures in Chart 2 may underrepresent investment into Nightstop services. The Network has anecdotal evidence to suggest that some Nightstops that are part of bigger organisations do not always fully recognise their organisations' contributions to delivering the service through the provision of, for example, staff, management, premises or overheads.

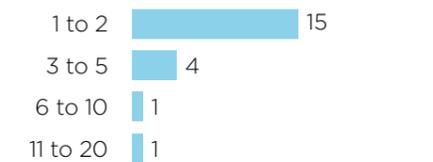
In terms of how Nightstops were funded, the primary sources tended to be statutory (public sector), trusts and foundations, or local communities (e.g. individual donations or funds raised through events). Of the 18 service managers who told us where their funding came from, 10 said they had at least some statutory funding. Seven said that 90% or more of their funding came from statutory sources. Seven services said at least half of their funding came from trusts and foundations.

Community fundraising appears to be an important source of income for Nightstops, with 10 of the 18 services for which information was given receiving at least some of their funding from their local communities. Two service managers said that more than half of their service's funding came from community sources.

#### Referrals

As shown in Chart 3, the majority of the services for which a managers' survey was completed received just one or two referrals to Nightstop a week. Only two of the 21 managers said their service received more than five referrals per week and only one more than 10.

The most common source of referrals tended to be local authorities, with all managers reporting that at least some of the referrals they receive come from local government. Services were also likely to receive referrals from other charities or housing associations, but these sources tended to provide a smaller proportion of referrals than local authorities.



Base: All respondents to service managers' survey (17)

Chart 3: Number of referrals per week

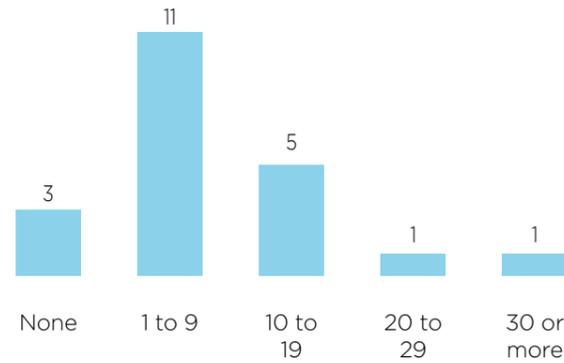
Half (10 out of 21) of the managers that completed the survey said that their services accepted self-referrals from young people. While two said that half of their referrals were from young people directly, most said that self-referrals accounted for no more than 15%.

#### Number of young people supported

Between them, the 21 Nightstops involved in this element of the research gave a total of 191 young people a safe place to stay in November 2017. One particularly large Nightstop (Nightstop North East) placed 70 young people. If this outlier is removed from the calculation, the Nightstops involved supported an average of six young people during the month. This makes sense in light of the majority of Nightstops receiving one or two referrals per week, and implies that the majority of referrals result in the placement of a young person with a Nightstop host.

Chart 4 shows the number of young people who were provided with a safe place to stay in November 2017. This is based on the 21 services involved with the survey.

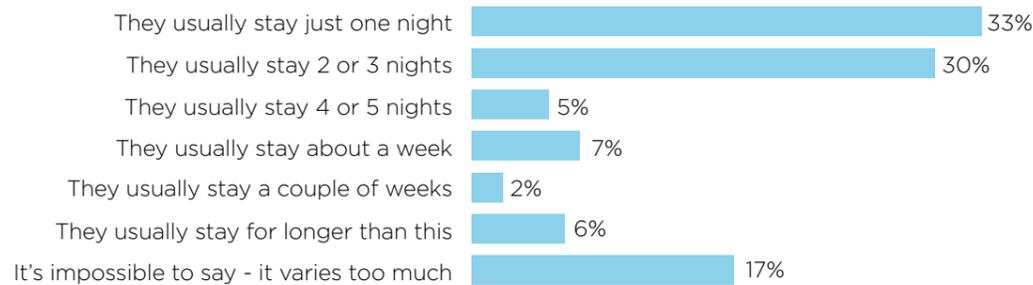
Twelve of the service managers who completed the survey said that, in accordance with Nightstop UK's guidelines, they did not allow young people to stay with a Nightstop host for longer than three weeks (six had set their maximum stay duration at a week or less). Nine services, however, allowed young people to stay with hosts for longer than three weeks, with five saying there was no limit on the length of time people could stay. This flexibility recognises the case by case nature of the service.



Base: All respondents to managers' survey (21)

Chart 4: Number of young people provided with a safe place to stay in November 2017

Despite this variation in the maximum amount of time a young person could stay with a host, when managers were asked how long the majority of young people stay in practice, only one manager said longer than two weeks. Chart 5 shows that feedback from hosts suggests that young people are staying for even shorter time periods, with nearly two-thirds (63%) staying three nights or fewer. It is possible that this disparity is down to managers considering the total length of young people's stay in Nightstop (which may involve stays with more than one host) while hosts were reporting on the length of time each young person stays with them specifically.

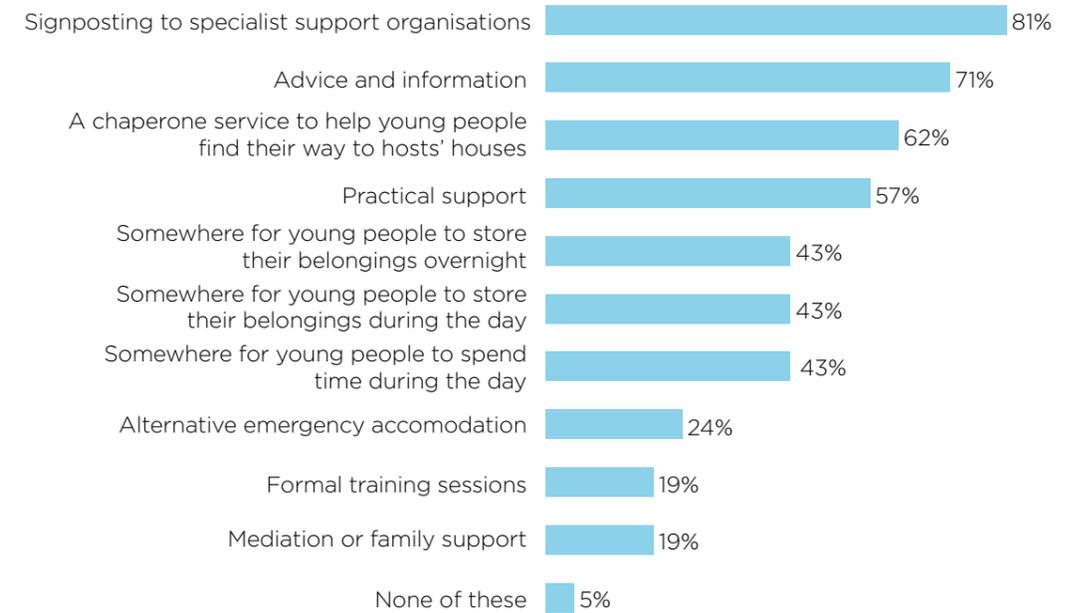


Base: All respondents to hosts' survey (136)

Chart 5: Length of stay with hosts

### Additional services offered

To complement the basic Nightstop service, most Nightstops offer additional support to young people. Chart 6 shows the proportion of Nightstops that offer each of the services listed in addition to safe nights with a Nightstop host.



Base: All respondents to managers' survey(21)

Chart 6: Additional services offered

The majority (81%) of the managers who completed the survey said that their Nightstops signposted young people to other organisations for specialist support (this includes formal referrals). Almost as many (71%) said their Nightstops provided young people with advice and information regarding their circumstances and options available to them, and more than half (57%) said they provided practical support, such as help to complete forms or open a bank account.

Travelling to a host's house independently can be daunting for some young people. To avoid "no shows" (young people failing to arrive for a planned stay), almost two thirds (62%) of the Nightstops involved in this element of the evaluation said they offer a chaperone service to help young people find their way.

Young people facing homelessness often have all their belongings with them, making it difficult to travel to and between hosts and to get around during the day when they are unable to be at hosts' houses. Almost half (43%) of managers said their service provided young people with somewhere to store their belonging overnight and the same proportion (43%) said young people could leave their belongings with them during the day. The same proportion again (43%) said they offered somewhere for young people to spend time during the day, such as a drop-in or social space.

As explained above, young people can only be placed with a Nightstop host if they are classified as "low risk". Those who may pose a risk to themselves or to Nightstop hosts are not placed. In these circumstances, or if references are yet to come through, Nightstop staff try to find alternative emergency accommodation for young people to avoid them

having to sleep somewhere unsafe. Almost a quarter (24%) of the services involved in this element of the evaluation had been able to offer alternative accommodation in-house. These tended to be Nightstops that were delivered by larger charities, such as the YMCA.

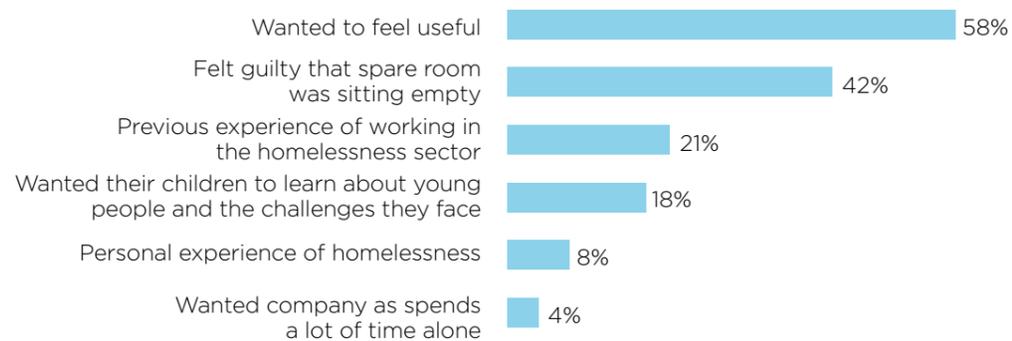
The least commonly offered additional services in our list were formal training sessions (for example, in budgeting or tenancy-related skills) and mediation or family support. These services were offered by one in five (19%) Nightstops in our sample.

### Nightstop hosts

The volunteer hosts are a fundamental part of the Nightstop process. Their experiences of the Nightstop service are outlined below.

#### Motivations for becoming a Nightstop host

As shown in Chart 7, the hosts who completed the hosts' survey were most likely to say they had become a host because they wanted to feel useful (58%) or felt guilty that there was a spare room sitting empty (42%). Around one in five (21%) had previous experience of working in the homeless sector that had motivated them to get involved. Far fewer people said they volunteered as a Nightstop host because they had personal experience of homelessness (8%) or for the company (4%).



Base: All respondents who completed motivations section of hosts' survey (137)

Chart 7: Motivations for becoming a Nightstop host

Hosts also gave a range of other reasons for having become a host. Many focused on wanting to make a difference to the lives of young people:

***“Because I empathise with teenagers and no one should be homeless.”***

***“I specifically wanted to make a difference to young people’s lives.”***

***“It was something we could do to help; also, we reflected that we would be so glad that Nightstop was available for our children if they were without a place to sleep, so it seemed sensible to offer one ourselves.”***

Others appreciated that hosting for Nightstop was a way of volunteering that was relatively flexible, and didn't require a fixed commitment on particular days or times:

***“We like the flexibility of being on-call only when we can as we are away three to four months of the year.”***

***“I like the flexibility of Nightstop as my work and personal commitments vary so I can’t offer the same nights or number of nights every week. Not many volunteer opportunities with young people can offer the level of flexibility that Nightstop does.”***

Several hosts mentioned their personal faith, and how this formed part of their motivation:

***“Christian faith.”***

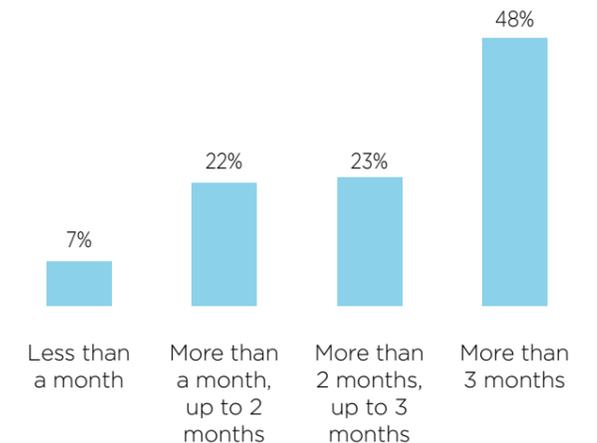
***“It’s a biblical principle.”***

***“I heard of Nottingham Nightstop through my church; I thought it sounded like a good project and wanted to contribute to what it is doing in the city.”***

***“Responding to God’s generosity.”***

#### The process of becoming a Nightstop host

Most of the hosts who completed the survey found the process of becoming a host “very straightforward” (46%) or “fairly straightforward” (48%). Those who said the process was complicated were asked why this was. The majority of responses related to the length of time it took to complete the process, with more than one mention of arranging their DBS check holding things up. There was also mention of the elements of the process (DBS, training and visit) seeming disjointed, and of “intrusive” questions or “unreasonable demands” during the visit (e.g. one respondent mentioned that she was asked to put a lock on the bathroom door, which she didn't want to do).



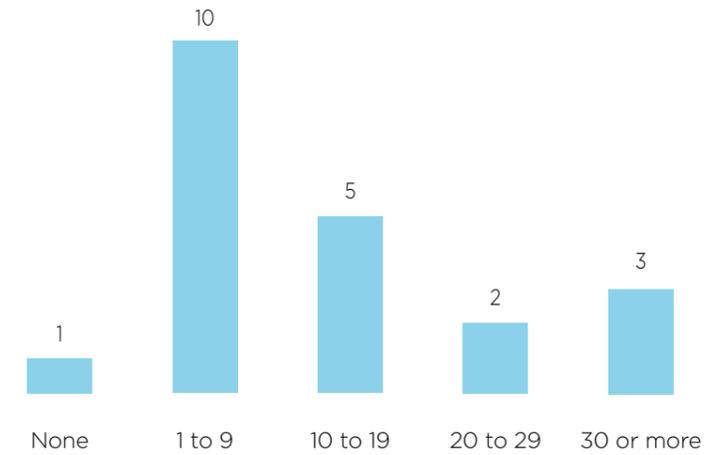
Base: All respondents to hosts' survey providing a response (120)

Chart 8: Length of time taken to become a host.

Chart 8 shows that the process for becoming a host is quite lengthy; very few (7%) said it took less than a month, while 48% said it took more than three months.

### Number of hosts per Nightstop

For the purpose of this evaluation, an “active host” was defined as a volunteer that had been available for hosting within the three months prior to the managers’ survey being completed. On average, the Nightstops for which a managers’ survey was completed had 14 active hosts on their books. As shown in Chart 9, half (11 of 21) of the services involved in this part of the evaluation had fewer than 10 hosts available to support young people.

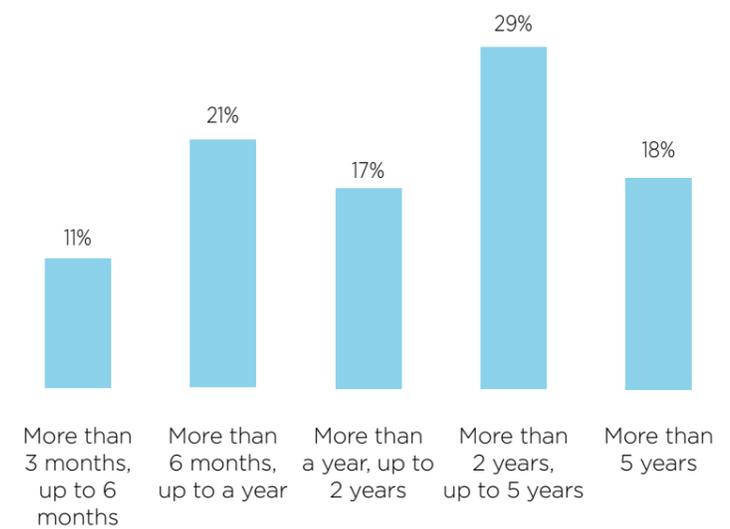


Base: All respondents to managers’ survey (21)

Chart 9: Number of active hosts per Nightstop

### Host experience

The length of time that the hosts who completed the survey had spent volunteering is shown in Chart 10. Most had been volunteering with Nightstop for some time, with almost half (47%) having been a Nightstop host for more than two years.



Base: All respondents to hosts’ survey (141)

Chart 10: Length of time volunteering as a host



As well as having been on a Nightstop’s books for a long time, most of the hosts who completed the survey had done a substantial amount of hosting. Around a third (32%) hosted more than 20 young people, with one in five (19%) having hosted more than 30. These findings suggest that Nightstops have an experienced and committed volunteer workforce to call on when needed.

### Host demographics

In terms of host demographics, our findings suggest that a typical Nightstop host is an older woman living with their partner or alone (see Tables 3, 4 and 5). Three quarters (77%) of the hosts who completed our survey were female, and the majority (57%) were older than 55. This means that hosts are likely to be the same age or older than young people’s parents or carers. Half (50%) of our survey sample lived with a partner or another adult and more than a third (38%) lived alone. Just over one in 10 (12%) said they volunteered as a family with children living in the house.

Despite the data showing there is a “typical host” in terms of demographics and living situation, most of the managers who completed the managers’ survey (17 out of 21) said that the mix of hosts they had on their books was either very (six) or fairly (11) varied. This implies that with sufficient host availability it should be possible for staff to match young people with hosts that they feel they would get on well with.

Response to our hosts’ survey implies that hosts are generally available to host quite frequently. Almost three in ten (28%) of those who completed the survey said they would host “whenever I’m needed”, and a further 29% said they are available to host two or three nights per week.

Only two managers, however, said that their services always had sufficient hosts available to allow for matching. Managers were most likely to say that matching was only possible sometimes (12 responses) and several said it was rarely (five responses) or never possible (one response).

	Number	%
Male	27	22%
Female	95	77%
Other	2	<1%
<b>Total providing response</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 3: Gender of hosts

	Number	%
Under 25	1	1%
26 - 35	12	9%
36 - 45	24	19%
46 - 55	18	15%
56 - 65	34	26%
Over 65	40	31%
<b>Total providing response</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 4: Age of hosts

	Number	%
On your own	49	38%
With a partner/at least one other adult	64	50%
As a family with children living at home	16	12%
<b>Total providing response</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 5: Household situation of hosts

### How young people use Nightstop

Our research with young people indicates that Nightstop guests vary in terms of how long they need the Nightstop service for. As shown in Table 6, roughly a third of the respondents to the young people’s survey used Nightstop for only one night, roughly a third used it for more than 15 nights, and the remaining third used it for between one and 15 nights. Those who used Nightstop for more than one night tended to stay with more than one host, although of those that stayed for more than one night, nine stayed with just one.

As shown in Table 7, those who responded to the survey were mostly current or recent guests of Nightstop. Fourteen had stayed with a Nightstop host in the past month, while only one had used the service more than a year ago. This means that our findings on short-term outcomes are likely to be more accurate than our findings on longer-term outcomes.

The young people who completed the survey were asked where they would have spent the night if Nightstop had not been available. They were able to provide multiple responses if there was more than one possibility. Of the 20 young people who answered the question (16 were unsure), 13 said that they might have slept on the streets or in a park, and nine on public transport or in a public building. Seven said they would have been likely to have spent the night at a close friend’s house, but four said they may have stayed with a stranger or someone they don’t know well. While staying at someone’s house might be seen as better than spending the night on the streets or on public transport, it comes with its own set of dangers for young people<sup>6</sup>.

	Number
1 night	10
2-3 nights	2
4-5 nights	5
6-10 nights	1
11-15 nights	6
More than 15 nights	11
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>35</b>

Table 6: Number of nights spent with a host

	Number
Less than a week ago	6
More than a week ago, but in the past month	8
More than a month ago, but in the past 3 months	9
More than 3 months ago, but in the past 6 months	6
More than 6 months ago, but in the past year	4
More than a year ago, but in the past 2-3 years	1
More than three years ago	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>35</b>

Table 7: Length of time since service users last stayed with a host

<sup>6</sup> See Depaul (2016), Danger Zones and Stepping Stones, <https://uk.depaulcharity.org/danger-zones-and-stepping-stones>

## What difference does Nightstop make to young people?

The young people we interviewed shared a diverse range of experiences, but when they were asked what difference Nightstop had made to their lives, common themes emerged. The outcomes we identified tended to be:

- **Short-term** (Changes experienced immediately or after a very short time within the service): These changes were experienced by those who used Nightstop on a one-off basis as well as those who used the service for a longer period of time. While some short-term changes were sustainable beyond the time young people were using the service, others applied only when the service was being received.
- **Long-term** (Changes experienced over a longer period of time): While short stays with Nightstop had a lasting effect for several of the young people we spoke to, in general long-term outcomes were most likely to be experienced by those who used Nightstop for longer periods.

### Immediate/short-term outcomes

The young people we interviewed described several immediate consequences of using Nightstop. While these outcomes were experienced by most of the young people we spoke to, their importance and intensity seemed to vary depending on young person's circumstances before they engaged with the service (e.g. whether or not they were sleeping rough). The outcomes described tended to relate to either physical/practical change or to a change in feelings or attitudes.

#### Physical change

Here we considered outcomes relating to immediate/short-term physical change. We explored the impact of Nightstop on service users' ability to take care of themselves; personal safety; sleep; ability to eat healthily; and ability to keep warm and dry. To give some indication of the prevalence of these outcomes (i.e. the proportion of Nightstop users who experienced them), we asked the young people who completed the online survey how much impact Nightstop had had on each of these aspects of their lives. We have presented the findings of both the interviews and this quantitative assessment below.

#### Improved personal care

While staying with a Nightstop host, young people are given the opportunity to shower/bath and wash their clothes. For the young people we interviewed who were sleeping rough (or on public transport) without access to facilities, or those who were staying in places (for example with friends) where their freedom to use facilities was limited, this was considered very important.

*“The B&B I stayed in was not very nice at all. I had to have the window open all night. . . I could use the bathroom, but the shower was full of mould. It was horrible, it wasn't nice. At [their host's house] the first thing I asked to do was “Can I use your shower please?” I'm filthy.”*

*(Nightstop guest, Nightstop South Yorkshire)*

*“I didn't have a shower for nearly two weeks, so I was pretty dirty and pretty wrecked because when I got kicked out of my previous home I didn't have any of my stuff, and they wouldn't let me have it, so all I had to my name was the clothes I was wearing.”*

*(Nightstop guest, Nightstop Bristol)*

Those living in volatile environments tend to neglect their health and personal care. This may involve partaking in “unhealthy” activities, such as binge-drinking or drug-taking, particularly if the need for accommodation leads to young people attending all-night parties (a common practice among young people who don't have a stable place to live<sup>7</sup>). By staying with a Nightstop host, young people (at least temporarily) avoid these activities and, therefore, the risk to their health.

*“I'd usually stay with a friend or something, but that would mean staying up all-night drinking and that. I didn't mind it, but I don't think it was that good really.”*

*(Nightstop guest, Nightstop London)*

Of the 35 young people who completed the online survey, 28 said that Nightstop had improved their ability to “take care of themselves”, with 16 stating that the service had made this “much better”. Only one respondent said that Nightstop had made no difference to their self-care and none said it had made it worse. As the sample was very small, the data must be treated with caution. However, it appears that the quantitative data supports the hypothesis that this outcome is particularly important to those who would have been sleeping rough if it was not for Nightstop's support. Sixteen of the young people who completed the survey said that if it was not for Nightstop they would have been likely to have slept on the streets or on public transport. Of these, all but one said the service had improved their ability to take care of themselves.

#### Reduced risk of harm

Sleeping rough or in places where they are vulnerable poses a risk to young people's safety (and the safety of their belongings). The young people we spoke to with experience of rough-sleeping explained how they had worried for their safety, experienced violence, and had their belongings stolen. Nightstop provided a safe-haven away from such risk, which they valued enormously.

Nightstop also offered safety to those who were leaving so-called “stable” accommodation. Several of the young people we spoke to were in need of a place to stay because they were fleeing a (potentially) violent relationship or in some cases neglect. Without Nightstop they would have returned to or continued to stay somewhere they could potentially have been harmed.

*“If it wasn't for [Nightstop] I wouldn't have been safe that night. If I'd have stayed [with my ex] and I don't think things would have turned out good.”*

*(Nightstop guest, Nightstop SASH)*

*“[Without Nightstop] I would probably have begged my mum to stay and then I would have been pretty miserable and scared. I'm really happy now, even though I'm moving from place to place.”*

*(Nightstop guest, Nightstop London)*

7 Depaul (2016), Danger Zones and Stepping Stones

Other research Depaul has undertaken has suggested that young people who are experiencing homelessness may be in danger of exploitation (e.g. sexual, financial)<sup>8</sup>. This is because their need for somewhere to stay can lead to an increased tolerance for situations that make them feel vulnerable, or which compromise their personal safety. Use of Nightstop can avoid the development of dangerous relationships where young people become dependent on others to put a roof over their head.

***“If you don’t have anywhere to stay you end up asking whoever and that’s not good. You don’t know the people and they could do whatever to you. I wouldn’t do that, but I know there’s people who do.”***

*(Nightstop guest, Nightstop London)*

Almost all the young people who completed the online survey (32 out of 35) felt that Nightstop had improved their personal safety, regardless of whether or not they would have been likely to sleep rough without the service. In concurrence with our interviews, this implies that safety concerns are not only associated with rough-sleeping. Other sleeping arrangements, such as staying with friends or family, can also put young people at risk of harm and Nightstop gives young people a safe alternative to such arrangements.

***“My mum’s just ‘on’ loads of stuff. I didn’t want to be in the same house as her so I moved out to my mates.”***

*(Nightstop guest SASH)*

### Improved sleep

To have the energy and mental capacity to make positive changes to their lives, and to have the resilience to cope with the difficult situations they face, young people need to be well-rested. Those sleeping rough, or in other places that make them vulnerable, struggle to sleep well, if at all.

***“[On the streets] there are these boys who always run after me. They’ll chase me – I’ll leave my stuff in the park, sometimes I won’t sleep for four days, five days, because I’m really scared when they chase me. So I don’t think sleeping on the street is good. Not good, because you are depressed and stressed.”***

*(Nightstop guest, Nightstop Sheffield)*

Even those in relatively safe accommodation find it difficult to sleep if that accommodation is not permanent (for example if they’re staying with a friend). This is because they are kept awake worrying about where they will stay the following night.

The majority of the young people we interviewed felt that Nightstop had helped them to sleep better. The online survey data supported this, with 27 of the 35 respondents saying that the service had made their sleep either much (20 respondents) or slightly (seven respondents) better.

Because Nightstop is a night-by-night service, some of the young people we spoke to felt that it did little to ease their concerns about where they would be staying in the longer term. This meant they continued to sleep poorly while in the service. Others, however, felt that the support of Nightstop made them feel less anxious (and, therefore, sleep better) despite this. They felt able to depend on the support of the service to find them somewhere to stay safe, so they were less concerned that they would end up on the streets or somewhere else that they would feel unsafe.

***“I didn’t like moving and you can’t really relax. But it’s better [than staying with friends] because you have someone to help you. They’ll put you somewhere, wherever that is.”***

*(Nightstop guest, London Nightstop)*

Those who stayed with the same Nightstop host for longer periods were most able to relax and experience improved sleep. For one interviewee, this outcome was particularly pronounced:

***“I explained to [my host] how my sleep is, and how I went to bed late and wake up early, and I don’t sleep well. I have this headache that always pains me. Even when I sleep good, I don’t sleep good. So she tells me, whenever I go to sleep, have a bath and take a book to read, and since I’ve been doing that, that helps me a lot, I sleep early, maybe 9, 10 O’Clock. I’m getting more sleep and feeling less tired.”***

*(Nightstop guest, Sheffield)*

### Increased access to healthy and nutritious food

Young people who are sleeping on the streets or in temporary accommodation (for example staying with friends) rarely eat well. A nourishing evening meal and substantial breakfast at hosts’ houses sets young people up for the day ahead.

During our interviews with young people, there were also mentions of Nightstop staff helping young people with these basic needs. For example, one young person was supported by Bristol Nightstop to fund a food shop:

***“At the time when I came to Nightstop I didn’t have a job and [Nightstop staff] said, ‘Have you eaten today?’, and I said, ‘No, I haven’t eaten for two days’... so, she actually went to Tesco and bought me loads of food. So obviously that was amazing. I can’t thank her enough for doing that. She also got me a gift card for Tesco, £75 pounds to obviously get some food. They just help you with everything.”***

*(Nightstop guest, Nightstop Bristol)*

Of the 35 young people who completed the online survey, 23 said Nightstop had improved their ability to eat healthily, with 16 saying the service had made this “much better”. There were, however, nine young people who said that Nightstop had made no difference to what they ate. This could suggest that some young people manage to eat relatively well while in temporary accommodation, but it could also be that, despite being offered home-cooked meals through Nightstop, young people continued to eat badly.

The impact of Nightstop in this area went beyond affecting what young people ate while in the service. Several of the service users we interviewed mentioned that their experience of eating at hosts’ houses was very different to what they were used to. In particular, they valued how eating with hosts was a social activity rather than just a necessity. They contrasted the experience with mealtimes in their childhood homes, which tended to be erratic and solitary.

***“It was really different at Nightstop. [The host] prepared dinner and we had set times to eat at the table. Before, if I was hungry I’d just get something then and there.”***

*(Nightstop guest, Nightstop Black Country)*

8 Depaul (2016), Danger Zones and Stepping Stones

**“We ate around the table with [our hosts]. I used to just eat up in my bedroom.”**

*(Nightstop guest, Nightstop Black Country)*

**Increased ability to stay warm and dry**

For those interviewees who had been sleeping rough or on public transport, having somewhere warm and dry to sleep was considered hugely important. Without this, their sleep would suffer further and they’d be prone to illness. This outcome was also important for those who were escaping neglect:

**“My mum wasn’t looking after me at all. She was spending all her money on drink. It was always cold so I got ill a lot and there was never anything to eat. I was 17 and I needed some routine and stability. I hated it there.”**

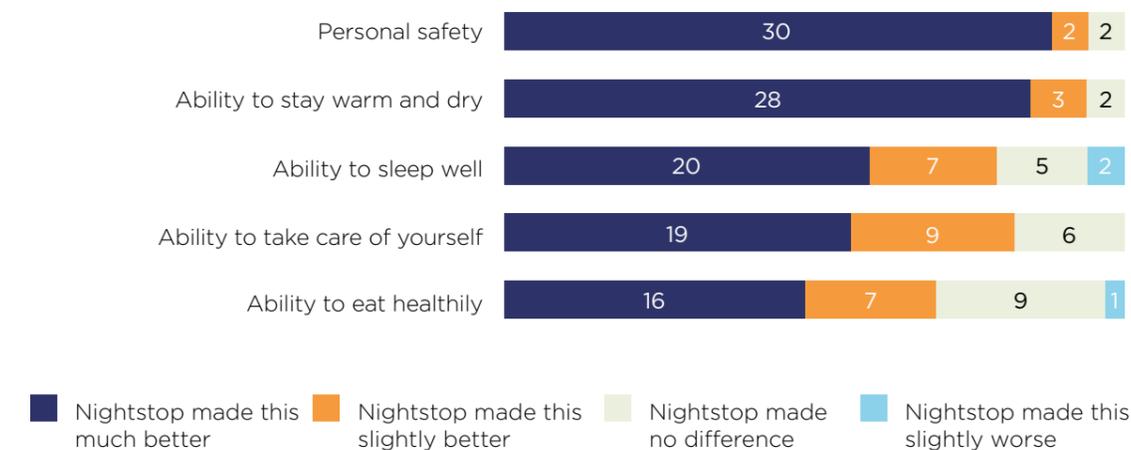
*(Nightstop guest, Nightstop Black Country)*

Almost all the young people who completed our online survey (31 out of 35) felt that Nightstop had improved their ability to stay “warm and dry”, with 28 saying the service had made this “much better”.

**Relative prevalence of short-term physical outcomes**

Because the sample size was so small, the data from the online survey should be treated with caution. However, Chart 11 gives some indication of the relative prevalence of the short-term physical outcomes considered above.

As shown in Chart 11, the immediate outcome of Nightstop most likely to be reported by our survey respondents was an improvement to personal safety. Almost as many respondents said that the service improved their ability to stay warm and dry. While the majority reported a positive change in both areas, outcomes relating to self-care and healthy eating appeared to be less prevalent amongst our survey group.



Base: All respondents to online survey (35)

Chart 11: Prevalence of short-term physical outcomes

**Change in feelings/attitudes**

Here we consider immediate/short-term outcomes that relate to changes in feelings or attitudes rather than physical change. Some of the outcomes described lead to others. We have organised them to show how some outcomes lead to others, as shown in Figure 2.

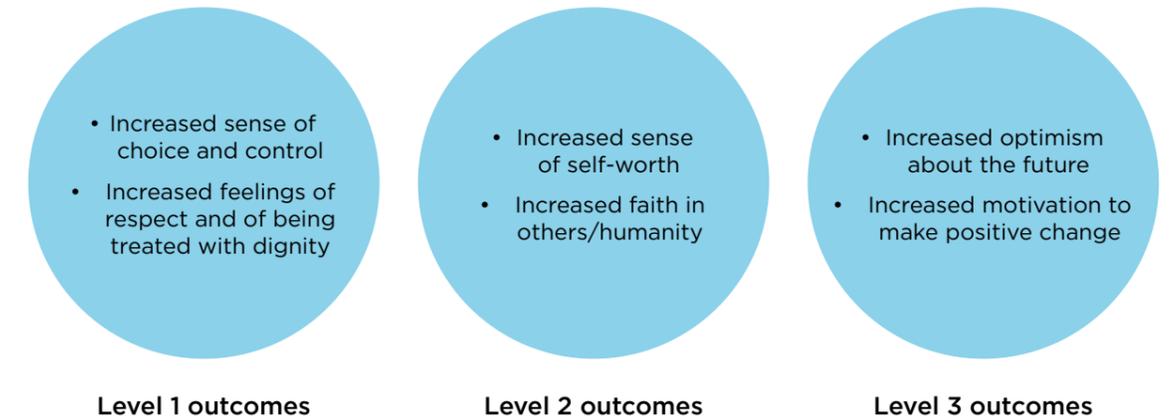


Figure 2: Immediate/short term outcomes relating to changes in feelings/attitudes

Level 1 outcomes were experienced immediately upon using the Nightstop service. These changes led to further changes that we have termed “Level 2 outcomes” and “Level 3 outcomes”.

To assess the prevalence of these outcomes, respondents to the online survey were asked about the changes they had experienced since using Nightstop. Because we felt those who had used the service in the past would be in a better position to reflect on the difference the service had made, we asked about the outcomes in slightly different ways. Current Nightstop users were simply asked to select which outcomes they had experienced from a predefined list. Those who had used the service in the past were asked to provide slightly more detail by stating their level of agreement with several statements relating to changes they may have experienced.

**Level 1 outcomes (short-term)**

**Increased sense of choice and control**

Most of the young people we interviewed felt trapped in their situation before using Nightstop, whether they were sleeping on the streets, with friends, or in difficult situations within their family homes. Those who were relying on others to put a roof over their head felt hugely dependent on the goodwill of the people they were staying with. This was particularly disagreeable for several interviewees who felt they were at an age where they should have been gaining independence rather than relying on others.

**“When I was homeless I was quite dependent on people. Seriously dependent. Obviously I’m nearly 20 so I shouldn’t be that dependent on other people around me.”**

*(Nightstop guest, Nightstop Bristol)*

Nightstop gave young people an alternative – a way to escape their circumstances and/or feelings of dependency – which made them feel more in control of their lives.

Several of the young people we spoke to felt that Nightstop had given them more control over how they spent their time and, in some cases, the ability to avoid dangerous behaviours. For example, one young person was living in a hostel prior to using Nightstop and felt she was falling into dangerous habits due to the influence of people around her. Nightstop enabled her to escape this environment and regain control over the direction her life was heading.

***“In the hostel there were a lot of kids doing drugs. I wasn’t trying to quit drugs, but staying there I was doing a lot more and it wasn’t getting good. Around me things weren’t going well and I was getting into a lot of trouble.”***

*(Nightstop guest, Nightstop Black Country)*

Young people also valued being able to choose how they spend their time with a Nightstop host. They were given freedom and privacy (e.g. they could choose whether to sit with the host for/after dinner or relax in their room), which was rare for a lot of the young people we spoke to.

Of the 35 young people who completed the online survey, 19 said that Nightstop had made them feel more in control of their lives<sup>9</sup>. The data suggests that those who had used the service more than three months prior to the survey were more likely to say this than current users. This implies that it takes some time for users to recognise the difference Nightstop made to them in this area.

### **Increased feelings of respect and of being treated with dignity**

Several of the young people we interviewed said that Nightstop made them feel part of society rather than defined by their homelessness or situation. They felt cared for and treated with dignity rather than judged. This was a strong contrast to how they had been feeling, particularly if they’d been sleeping on the streets or having to “beg” people for a place to stay.

***“People [at Nightstop] engaged with me, they didn’t just judge me on what they saw. If you’d have seen me, I looked like a homeless guy because I was a homeless guy. I was run down, I smelt, but they didn’t judge me for that. They still welcomed me, made me feel like I was a human being.”***

*(Nightstop guest, Nightstop Sheffield)*

***“It was different. I didn’t feel like I was begging. I was asking them for help, but it wasn’t like charity like it is with other people.”***

*(Nightstop guest, Nightstop London)*

<sup>9</sup> Of 14 current users of the service, 4 selected ‘I feel I have greater choice and control over my future’ as an outcome they had experienced. Of 19 past users of the service, 15 agreed with the statement ‘Nightstop has given me more control over my future’. Two respondents did not complete this section of the questionnaire.

Respondents to the online survey were also likely to report that Nightstop had increased their sense of being treated with dignity and respect, with 19 of the 35 young people who completed the survey indicating they had experienced this outcome<sup>10</sup>. Again, it appears that those who had used Nightstop some time ago were more likely to report experience of this outcome than current users, perhaps suggesting that young people need some time to reflect before recognising the full impact of the service.

### **Level 2 outcomes (short-term)**

#### **Increased self-esteem and sense of self-worth**

By the time some of the young people we interviewed had engaged with Nightstop, their attitude towards themselves was very negative. Some felt that they deserved the hardship they were facing and/or their circumstances were their fault. Those who had been staying with obliging friends and family felt like a burden or inconvenience, which reinforced these negative feelings.

***“[Before Nightstop] I didn’t really think much about myself to be honest. If I think now, I don’t think I liked who I was that much. I didn’t do anything bad, but I didn’t do anything good either. I just sort of went with it, took things where I could. Not a good place to be really.”***

*(Nightstop guest, Nightstop London)*

The experience of having someone care about them through Nightstop, and of being treated with respect and dignity, reminded service users that they were valued and worth caring about. In turn, this made them care more about themselves.

***“[Nightstop] definitely made me feel better as a person. When I came here I was in a bit of a state, and I was making out as if it was my fault... They helped me with the realisation that it wasn’t my fault. I’m actually a decent person.”***

*(Nightstop guest, Nightstop Bristol)*

In addition, having hosts go out of their way to make their guests comfortable prompted some interviewees to behave better than they usually might, which also had a positive impact on their self-esteem.

***“I never wanted to change; I never even considered it. But [Nightstop] gave me a reason to. I felt like if I did anything [bad], I was just being disrespectful to him [since] he was going out of his way to make sure I’m comfortable in his home.”***

*(Nightstop guest, Nightstop Bristol)*

Of the 35 young people who completed the online survey, 14 said that Nightstop had improved their attitude towards themselves<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> Of 14 current users of the service, four selected “I feel I am treated with more dignity” as an outcome they had experienced. Of 19 past users of the service, 15 agreed with the statement “I feel more respected and valued because of Nightstop”. Two respondents did not complete this section of the questionnaire.

<sup>11</sup> Of 14 current users of the service, three selected “I feel more positive about myself” as an outcome they had experienced. Of 19 past users of the service, 11 agreed with the statement “I feel better about myself because of Nightstop”. Two respondents did not complete this section of the questionnaire.

### Increased faith in others/humanity

Being treated with respect and dignity also reminded service users of the good in other people. Several of the young people we interviewed described how their experience of homelessness had led to them feeling very negative about the world and mistrusting of the people in it. They said, however, that Nightstop had reminded them that there were good people in the world willing to help others.

***“It’s opened my eyes to a better world really. Because when I was kicked out I was like ‘the world sucks’. I hated it. I was a bit depressed really. But then Nightstop helped. They did what they did and it opened my eyes really.”***

*(Nightstop guest, Nightstop Bristol)*

***“Because they were so nice it made me realise that there are some nice people out there who are really nice and there to help.”***

*(Nightstop guest, Nightstop Black Country)*

The realisation that there are people like Nightstop hosts in the world made service users both more likely to ask for help and more confident that they would receive it if they did.

### Level 3 outcomes (short-term)

#### Increased optimism about the future

As explained above, the support and encouragement provided by hosts (and other Nightstop staff) helped the young people we interviewed feel more positive about themselves and the world around them. As a consequence of using Nightstop, they felt both more worthy of support and more confident that support would be available should they need it. This made them more optimistic that their circumstances would improve and consider options that they may not have done previously.

***“I was at rock bottom before I came here. I was in hospital because I’d done something stupid. I was really down. I didn’t want to be here anymore. When I came [to Nightstop] I was like ‘There’s no hope, I’m not going to get anywhere’. Now I’m a completely different person. To think that in two weeks I’d have my own space with my own bedroom. It’s amazing really, they really have done an amazing job.”***

*(Nightstop guest, Nightstop Bristol)*

In addition, there was more than one mention of Nightstop being a very positive environment. Interviewees described how being surrounded by positive people gave them a lift, which was in some cases enough to spur them on to make real changes to their lives.

One young person was particularly encouraged by the openness and honesty of her host who had told her about the difficulties she had experienced in her own life. She was inspired by the resilience her host had shown and felt more optimistic that her own story would have a positive ending.

***“[There’s] just such a positive atmosphere. I think that’s rubbed off on me. I’ve left much more positive than I was when I arrived. And also inspired because the host was kind enough to be open with me about past experiences and stuff. It was really, really inspiring to hear about other people’s trials and tribulations and how she had dealt with it. Her resilience caught my attention.”***

*(Nightstop guest, Black Country)*

There was a suggestion from some interviewees that, before Nightstop, they weren’t necessarily feeling negative about their future, but instead they didn’t have time to consider it. Nightstop gave them the time and space they needed to consider what they wanted from life and to develop goals. Just having something to aim for made them feel better:

***“I’ve been given a lot of time to think and get my head straight... Just being given the space and time to sit on my own and think about my next move or what’s going to happen without being pushed into it or forced to make a decision. That’s made me feel much better about things and more in control.”***

*(Nightstop guest, Black Country)*

To test the prevalence of this outcome, we asked those who completed the online survey whether Nightstop had given them “space to think and plan for the future”. Of the 35 who completed the survey, 19 felt that it had<sup>12</sup>. A slightly smaller number (14 of 35) said their experience had made them more positive about the future in general<sup>13</sup>.

#### Increased motivation to make positive change

The combination of all the outcomes described above increased young people’s motivation to improve their lives. They felt more worthy of a positive future and more optimistic that one was possible. Interviewees also mentioned that Nightstop had given them experience of a stable, happy environment – something real to strive for.

***“Just seeing how they were, how they lived. It made me think ‘I want that too’, you know? It made me get out and do things that I wouldn’t have done without [Nightstop]”***

*(Nightstop guest, Black Country)*

Of the 35 young people who completed the online survey, 21 felt that Nightstop had increased their motivation to improve their lives<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> Of 14 current users of the service, six selected “I have more time and space to think and plan for the future” as an outcome they had experienced. Of 19 past users of the service, 13 agreed with the statement “Nightstop has given me more time and space to think about the future”. Two respondents did not complete this section of the questionnaire.

<sup>13</sup> Of 14 current users of the service, two selected “I feel more positive about the future and what it holds for me” as an outcome they had experienced. Of 19 past users of the service, 12 agreed with the statement “I feel more positive about the future because of Nightstop”. Two respondents did not complete this section of the questionnaire.

<sup>14</sup> Of 14 current users of the service, six selected “I feel more motivated to do well in the future” as an outcome they had experienced. Of 19 past users of the service, 15 agreed with the statement “I feel more motivated to make positive changes because of Nightstop”. Two respondents did not complete this section of the questionnaire.

### Relative prevalence of short-term attitudinal outcomes

Because the sample size was so small, the data from the online survey should be treated with caution. However, Chart 12 gives some indication of the relative prevalence of the short-term attitudinal outcomes considered above.



Base: All respondents to online survey (35)

Chart 12: Prevalence of short-term attitudinal outcomes

### Longer-term outcomes

It was evident from our interviews with young people who had used Nightstop in the past that the service had affected at least some of their lives in the long term. Interviewees spoke of a number of different changes, which we have grouped into six categories:

- 1 Social and emotional capabilities
- 2 Practical skills and knowledge
- 3 Engagement with education, employment and training
- 4 Relationships
- 5 Health (physical and mental)
- 6 Securement of long-term accommodation

As these outcomes would be relevant only to those who had used the service some time ago, we felt that their exploration in the online survey would provide us with too little data to be meaningful. For this reason, we did not assess their prevalence as we did for shorter-term outcomes. This also helped to keep the survey short, so that response could be maximised.

#### Social and emotional capabilities

Several of the young people we spoke to felt that their social and communication skills had improved as a result of using Nightstop. While they found it challenging in some respects, staying with different people and moving around frequently helped them become more adaptable to different social situations and to get on with people from different backgrounds – something they felt would help them in later life. One young person who since her stay with Nightstop had progressed to independent living and pursued a career working with young people felt that without the service this would not have been possible as she was “too cautious” and “shy”:

***“I’m more open-minded [since Nightstop]. Before, I was unsure about everything thinking ‘I can’t go there, I can’t do that.’ I was very cautious about everything, to go to different places, talk to different people. I’m OK with myself now, and I feel so much more independent – my confidence has grown and I can bond with people so much better now.”***

(Nightstop guest, Black Country)

Some of the young people we spoke to mentioned that Nightstop had given them the opportunity to spend time with people from completely different walks of life – something they found both educational and inspiring. This was particularly important for those who felt their social network had been limited previously.

***“I met 10 people from 10 different countries, from teachers to architects to lawyers. I’d never had that before and it was good to speak to different people. It opens your eyes to things and what different people do with their lives... I don’t think I would have had that from anywhere else.”***

(Nightstop guest, London)

In some cases, using Nightstop presents young people with a number of daunting challenges. For example, as Nightstop hosts are sometimes spread across a large geographical area, some of the young people we spoke to had to travel some distance to use the service. Most had done very little travelling before – even within their home town – so this was a new and intimidating task. While they found the distance between hosts inconvenient (and even highlighted this as an area for service improvement), and were nervous about the prospect of knocking on a stranger’s door, being forced to do things outside their comfort zone had clear benefits. For example, it demonstrated their ability to rise to challenges they would have previously avoided, and to overcome limiting feelings of anxiety. This made them more likely to accept challenges and be more adventurous in the future.

***“I’d never been that far before or used buses or anything – I was really scared. And I got lost too – it took me two hours! But I’m pleased I did it because it wasn’t that bad really and now I’m OK with getting around and buses or whatever. They helped me and now I’m OK to try completely new things. I was so scared before.”***

(Nightstop guest, Black Country)

#### Practical skills and knowledge

Through Nightstop, several of the young people we spoke to had gained practical skills, such as budgeting, cooking and basic domestic skills. These young people tended to be those who had stayed with the same host for a prolonged period of time (e.g. more than a week).

***“It’s taught me a lot of life skills that I’m now doing all on my own... washing, cleaning, ironing, food, everything.”***

(Nightstop guest, Black Country)

***“I helped [my host] cook dinner sometimes, which was good... I cooked before, but only things like toast and pasta. I hadn’t cooked properly but they taught me that.”***

(Nightstop guest, Black Country)



***“Because it was their house and they were putting you up, you felt like you should look after it. I tried to keep it clean and tidy and got a lot better at that. I never really cared before, but they made me feel like I should. Not in a bad way – they didn’t shout at me or anything – I just didn’t want to disrespect them.”***

*(Nightstop guest, Black Country)*

Those who stayed with Nightstop for less time also picked up practical skills, but this tended to be as a result of their contact with Nightstop staff rather than their hosts.

***“[Nightstop] helped me with budgeting. I came here and [Nightstop staff] helped me go through everything and plan. I came a couple times. It’s made me feel better about making sure I can pay everything now I’m in my own place.”***

*(Nightstop guest, Nightstop Black Country)*

One young person mentioned that in addition to helping him develop life skills, Nightstop had alerted him to the skills he might need for independent living – something he hadn’t considered previously. This helped him to engage with support in a way he may not have done otherwise.

***“If it wasn’t for Nightstop I wouldn’t have had the time to sit down and think about budgeting and how real life actually is, not living with parents. Having to stand on your own two feet and pretty much do everything yourself, including bills, time management and dates and everything like that. It made me realise I had a lot to learn and I learnt it.”***

*(Nightstop guest, Nightstop Black Country)*

For young people to move out of homelessness and successfully sustain independence, it is important they know where they can get support should they need it. It is made clear to those who use Nightstop that they can return at any time if they find themselves without a place to stay in the future. In addition, the service signposts young people to alternative providers of specialist support. This knowledge of where to go for support made young people feel less vulnerable.

***“[I know] that there’s always a place I can go if I need support for pretty much anything.”***

*(Nightstop guest, Nightstop Black Country)*

### **Engagement with education, employment and training**

Several interviewees who had been living in chaotic circumstances before Nightstop mentioned that their education had suffered as a consequence. For example, one young person who had been living with friends said they had been unable to concentrate on college work because of disrupted sleep. Another said they had nowhere to revise for exams in the overcrowded space in which they were living. Those who had stayed with hosts for a prolonged period of time said that Nightstop had given them time to focus on their education and achieve better results than they would have done otherwise.

***“I aced my exams. I wouldn’t have done that if I’d been at home. There were arguments all the time and I had no space to revise. I might not have even taken them.”***

*(Nightstop guest, Nightstop Black Country)*

Others mentioned that having a stable place to stay enabled them to continue with school/college courses that they may have been forced to abandon if they'd continued to live where they were, or that they had begun college or university courses that they didn't feel they would have started without Nightstop.

***“I quit work because I was too tired for college, but that’s why I couldn’t pay my rent. I was still going to college while I was homeless but I don’t think I would have finished. I would have had to stop and get another job.”***

*(Nightstop guest, Nightstop London)*

***“It’s made my life better. Without it I wouldn’t have coped. I wouldn’t have gone to college, things like that. I would have found it harder to apply for things.”***

*(Nightstop guest, Nightstop Black Country)*

***“(Nightstop staff) really helped me because I’m back on my feet now. I’m doing Maths, English Level 2.”***

*(Nightstop guest, SASH)*

Several of the young people we spoke to had found employment partly as a result of their engagement with Nightstop. In some cases, Nightstop had referred them to specialist organisations that could help them secure work, and, in others, helped them secure work or apprenticeships directly.

***“They referred me to this place that finds work for people. That’s how I got the job at Primark”***

*(Nightstop guest, Nightstop London)*

***“[Nightstop staff] have got me an apprenticeship, I think. It’s a landscaping apprenticeship. I used to do landscaping for about two years.”***

*(Nightstop guest, Nightstop Bristol)*

There was a strong feeling among some interviewees that they wouldn't have been able to find work if it hadn't been for Nightstop, particularly if they'd been trying for a long time previously.

***“No, I don’t think I would have [found work without Nightstop]. I’d been trying for ages and nothing was coming up. It’s much harder doing it on your own.”***

*(Nightstop guest, Nightstop London)*

One of the young people we spoke to thought she would have got a job without Nightstop. However, she felt that her experience of the service had helped her find work that she enjoyed, which made it more sustainable than other roles might have been. This is because it had broadened her horizons and encouraged her to apply for different types of roles.

***“I’m a completely different person now. Before the sort of jobs I would have gone for were quiet little office jobs that I didn’t like and wouldn’t have stuck at. But now I’ve got a job with [the National Citizen Service]. I’m staying with different people, going to different places. I love it!***

*(Nightstop guest, Nightstop Black Country)*

## Personal relationships

The majority of the young people who used Nightstop to escape volatile family homes felt that their relationships with family members (particularly parents) had improved as a result of them having somewhere else to stay. The service gave all parties “time out” which helped to diffuse arguments. In some cases, finding some independence through Nightstop also helped young people to become more assertive, which won them respect within the family home.

***“Things would have got worse if I’d gone back home. We wouldn’t have a relationship like we do now. I definitely don’t want to go back there, but it’s much better than it was.”***

*(Nightstop guest, Nightstop London)*

***“Because I’m not there anymore and have achieved so much, I think they respect me more. It’s still difficult at times, but much better than in was.”***

*(Nightstop guest, Nightstop Black Country)*

In some cases, this enabled young people to maintain important relationships with other family members, such as their siblings.

***“We talk rather than shout now, which is an improvement. It means I can go there to see my brothers and sisters. I wasn’t away for long but I really missed them.”***

*(Nightstop guest, Nightstop London)*

***“Things are much better now. I went to town yesterday with my little sister. She’s 16 and still lives at home. I think they’re actually proud of me now, but they’d never say that!”***

*(Nightstop guest, Nightstop Black Country)*

Young people who had previously relied on friends to provide them with somewhere to stay were relieved to have an alternative in Nightstop. This avoided pressure on their friends and possible damage to relationships.

***“I usually stayed with friends, which was fine. But if I did that for a long time, they might start to get annoyed I suppose. I think I would if I had someone hanging around all the time.”***

*(Nightstop guest, Nightstop London)*

As well as enabling young people to maintain or repair existing relationships, in some cases the service helped them gain new friendships and sources of ongoing support. One of the young people we interviewed had recently moved to the UK and knew very few people. Nightstop gave him someone to talk to and people he considered to be “local friends”. In all cases where young people stayed with the same hosts for a substantial amount of time (i.e. more than two weeks), they remained in contact with the families they had stayed with after moving on. These families remained a source of emotional support. One young person went as far as describing her hosts as “family”:

***“I’m more confident now, more mature, grown up and I feel like I have a family through my hosts.”***

*(Nightstop guest, Nightstop SASH)*

**Health (physical and mental)**

Those who used Nightstop for a prolonged period of time felt the benefits of eating healthily and resting well on their physical health. In particular, they spoke of reduced fatigue and stabilised body weight.

*“I did feel better after being there, yes. I suppose because I was sleeping better and getting more food. I was really thin before and always really tired.”*

*(Nightstop guest, Nightstop Black Country)*

Several of the young people we spoke to said their mental health was poor when they first engaged with Nightstop. For some, this improved after using the service. Specifically, young people spoke of reduced anxiety and depression, reduced dependence on substances and fewer suicidal thoughts. Importantly, it wasn't only those with diagnosed mental health issues who reported this outcome. Other young people were also likely to experience an improvement in their mental health.

*“I've been struggling with my mental health for a while now, nothing diagnosed, but a deep depression I've faced for quite some time - a few years. So when things get really bad and there's no hope around I entertain the idea of suicide and stuff. And before I was 'Nobody really wants to help me. I'm on my own so what's the point?' But [Nightstop] gave me a lot of hope, so such help. So I'm miles different now - completely different. I don't think like that now.”*

*(Nightstop guest, Nightstop Bristol)]*

**Improved access to secure accommodation**

The longer-term impact of Nightstop on young people's housing situation is difficult to judge from the data gathered through this evaluation. Most of the young people who responded to the survey had used Nightstop relatively recently, so their housing situations were still relatively unstable. In addition, the variety of challenges facing vulnerable young people can mean that their housing situation changes quickly. However, the qualitative research showed that, at least in some instances, the work of Nightstop can help young people access more secure accommodation. In some cases, Nightstop staff were able to formally refer young people to housing providers for assistance. In others Nightstop users were signposted to services that could help them, resulting in more secure housing being found. There was also evidence that by improving their knowledge, confidence and in some cases helping them find work, the experience of Nightstop can help young people find more permanent accommodation on their own.

*“[Nightstop] helped me to get my job and because of that I can rent where I'm living. Without them I wouldn't have got a job so I don't know where I'd be. I wouldn't be able to pay for my own place.”*

*(Nightstop guest, Nightstop London)*

**Summary of outcomes for young people**

Figure 3 shows a summary of the outcomes we identified for users of the Nightstop service.

<p><b>Short term</b></p> <p><b>Physical change</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved personal care</li> <li>• Reduced risk of harm</li> <li>• Improved sleep</li> <li>• Increased access to healthy and nutritious food</li> <li>• Increased ability to stay warm and dry</li> </ul>			<p><b>Long-term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved social and emotional capabilities</li> <li>• Improved practical skills and knowledge</li> <li>• Increased engagement with education, employment and training</li> <li>• Improved/new personal relationships</li> <li>• Improved health (physical and mental)</li> <li>• Improved access to secure accommodation</li> </ul>					
<p><b>Change in feelings and attitudes</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Level 1</th> <th>Level 2</th> <th>Level 3</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased sense of choice and control</li> <li>• Increased feelings of respect and of being treated with dignity</li> </ul> </td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased optimism about the future</li> <li>• Increased motivation to make positive change</li> </ul> </td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased sense of self-worth</li> <li>• Increased faith in others/humanity</li> </ul> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>				Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased sense of choice and control</li> <li>• Increased feelings of respect and of being treated with dignity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased optimism about the future</li> <li>• Increased motivation to make positive change</li> </ul>
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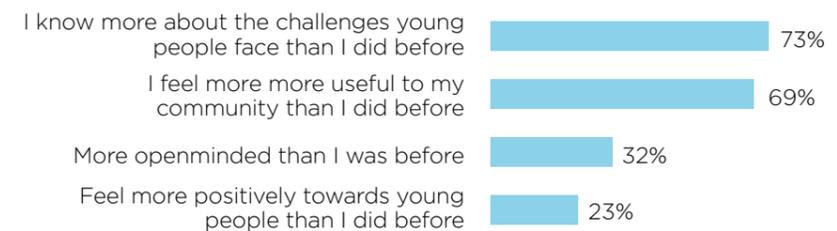
Figure 3: Summary of outcomes for young people

**What difference does Nightstop make to hosts?**

During the interviews we undertook with Nightstop hosts, we asked them whether opening their doors to young people who need a place to stay had made a difference to them personally. We tested the prevalence of the outcomes they mentioned in the online survey we sent to hosts.

The general consensus among host interviewees was that their involvement with Nightstop made little difference to them personally, but that this was as expected. Hosts were keen to convey that they did not get involved for their own benefit but for the benefit of young people.

That said, as shown in Chart 13, the majority of hosts did experience some change as a result of their hosting role.



Base: All respondents to hosts' online survey who completed section on outcomes (132)

Chart 13: Outcomes experienced by Nightstop hosts.

As described in the “About Nightstop hosts” section above, a number of the hosts that completed the online survey had experience of working with young people before they became involved with Nightstop. Even so, the majority (73%) felt they had learned more about the challenges young people face as a result of their experience as a host. For several of hosts we spoke to, the knowledge they had gained through helping some young people had increased their motivation to help more. One interviewee felt that this knowledge was rare among retired people and that if people understood more they would be more willing to help.

***“Lots of people who are retired don’t have a clue about what the world is like outside, but we’re involved and aware and learning. We’re all interdependent on each other, so it’s important that we help younger generations where we can. Lots of people see things going on and expect others to do something about it, but Nightstop gives you the opportunity to actually do something. If more people had the knowledge we’ve gained I expect they would want to help as well.” (Male host, Nightstop Bristol)***

A quarter (23%) of those who completed the online survey said that their experience had made them think more positively about young people than they did before. One interviewee said he had previously been intimidated if he came across a group of “youths” in his community, but that his experience of hosting had made him much more at ease. Another said she had been impressed with how well-mannered and respectful the young people she had hosted had been, and that this had exceeded her expectations.

The majority of the Nightstop hosts we spoke to became involved with the service because they wanted to feel useful and do something to help young people in need. Seven in 10 (69%) of those who completed the online survey said that being a Nightstop host had made them feel more useful to their community than they did before. Those who did not report this outcome were likely to have been a Nightstop host for only a short time (less than three months), or to have hosted a limited number of young people. From the interviews it also seems that some hosts were already very engaged with their communities before becoming a Nightstop host. This could mean the addition of their Nightstop host role had little effect on how useful they felt overall.

Several of the hosts we interviewed spoke of the variety of young people who had come to stay with them, and of how different each person’s story had been. They felt that hearing about young people’s experiences and trying to see the world through their eyes had made them more open-minded than they were before. One host mentioned that she hoped this would benefit her relationship with her grandchildren as they got older.

***“I’m definitely more open-minded than I was before. I’ve heard so many different stories and it’s really opened my eyes to how things are – especially for young people. I wasn’t judgemental before, but I think I probably was more than I am now. I have grandchildren and I hope that means I’ll have a better relationship with them in the future.” (Female host, Nightstop South Yorkshire)***

Almost a third (32%) of the hosts who completed the online survey felt that the experience of being a Nightstop host had made them more open-minded.

There were other outcomes mentioned by interviewees that appeared less prevalent and were therefore not measured in the online survey. For example, one young woman described how being a host had helped her to become more organised at home. She wanted the young people who stayed with her to experience a calm (and well-equipped) household so made sure her house was always clean and tidy and that the cupboards were well stocked. She felt that she benefitted from this as much as the young people did.

Another said that while he did not personally benefit from the experience of being a host, his children had gained enormously as a result of young people staying in their family home. They lived a sheltered and comfortable life, but Nightstop had exposed them to “the real world” which the host hoped would stop them from taking their good fortune for granted. The young people who stayed with them had also shown enormous resilience – something he hoped would “rub off” on his children.

### Enablers of positive outcomes for young people and hosts

From the interviews with young people, hosts, and referrers, it was clear that certain elements of the Nightstop service were key facilitators of positive change for young people and hosts.

#### Non-judgemental staff and hosts

As described above, a key outcome for young people relates to the feelings of respect and dignity they experience when interacting with Nightstop staff and hosts. This is dependent on Nightstop personnel having a non-judgemental attitude and treating all young people as individuals.

#### Adequate staff time for young people and hosts

Several of the young people we spoke to mentioned that they had appreciated the time that staff spent with them to listen to their story, agree the support that was needed and prepare them for their stay with a Nightstop host. There was no indication that any interviewee had felt rushed or pushed into a situation they felt unprepared for. Young people and hosts alike praised staff for being available as and when they were needed to provide practical support or a listening ear.

#### Varied hosts in terms of demographics and background

During the interviews with staff and young people, there were very few incidents highlighted of young people not getting on with the host they were placed with. It was clear, however, that the most successful placements were those where young person and host had things in common. For example, one young person who was taking a course at art college explained how she had particularly enjoyed staying with an art teacher. She said it instantly gave them something to talk about and removed any tension between them. Having a wide variety of hosts available for hosting enables young people to be matched with hosts more effectively, thereby improving some outcomes.

#### Good host availability

Encouragingly, none of the young people we spoke to said there had been any occasion when they had needed Nightstop that there wasn’t a host able to support them. However, providing accommodation for all young people who need it clearly depends on sufficient hosts being available at all times.

As well as a good variety of hosts, successful matching is dependent on there being enough hosts for there to be a legitimate choice between them. This does not just relate to the number of hosts a Nightstop service has on its books, but also the spread of hosts' availability across each week. A Nightstop requires enough hosts to be available each night of the week to be able to choose where young people are placed.

### Clear information sharing between hosts and young people

Young people mentioned that their anxiety before a placement was lessened if they had good information about the host(s) they were to be staying with. Equally, hosts felt that they were able to provide a better service to young people if they had accurate information about each guest. Neither side wanted detail about the other's background as they felt this was, and should remain, private. Instead they wanted clear information about each other's likes, dislikes and interests. Hosts wanted advice regarding any subjects that should be brought up or avoided in conversation with young people. Most hosts felt that the staff at their Nightstop were very good at providing information about the young people that would be staying with them.

### Provision of transport, directions and chaperones

Very few of the hosts we spoke to mentioned that they had had much experience of young people not arriving when a placement had been scheduled. This implies that "no-shows" are not a significant problem for the service. One host who had been involved with Nightstop for a number of years, however, said that historically no-shows were much more commonplace. She felt that this improvement was down to her Nightstop's increased efforts to ensure young people arrived safely through the provision of transport, travel money, clear directions and chaperones. Young people also valued being taken to a new host by someone they knew (e.g. a Nightstop staff member) rather than having to find it themselves.

### Flexible, adaptable service (led by young people)

All of the hosts we spoke to said the young people they had hosted were all very different from one another. This meant they wanted very different things from their stay. For example, while some young people wanted to join them for dinner and engage in conversation, others wanted to eat in their room and go straight to bed. Hosts felt that the key to providing a good service was to be flexible and follow each young person's lead.

### Good network of referring options (for move-on and specialist support)

Giving a young person a place to stay with a Nightstop host keeps them safe for that night. The aim, however, is to find a more permanent solution to each young person's homelessness. For some young people, this may involve a move back to their previous place of residence (e.g. to their family home), but, for others, alternative accommodation must be secured. Nightstops are more equipped to help young people move on if they have a strong network of referring options. Where a Nightstop service is delivered by a larger organisation, this may involve longer-term solutions within that organisation, such as supported accommodation or supported lodgings.

A good range of partner agencies is not only important for securing move-on accommodation. During our interviews we came across several instances of Nightstop providing excellent support to young people by referring them elsewhere for specialist help (for example, for support to find employment).

### On-call service (for hosts)

In general, the hosts we spoke to felt very comfortable welcoming young people into their homes. Almost all of them, however, mentioned the "on call" service as being one of the most important aspects of Nightstop. Being able to contact a Nightstop staff member at any time of the day or night gave them reassurance that, if anything did go wrong during a placement, there would be support available.

### Potential barriers/limiters of positive outcomes for young people and hosts

From the interviews with young people, hosts and referrers, we have identified some areas that may require attention in some Nightstops. These factors may be preventing or limiting the positive change achieved for stakeholders as a result of their involvement with Nightstop.

#### Distance between hosts

When young people were asked how they felt the Nightstop service could be improved, almost all of them mentioned that they would like to be able to stay in one place for longer rather than move around. While moves should be minimised where they can be, lengthy stays are not always possible or desirable due to the nature of the service.

Young people were generally accepting of the fact they would need to move between hosts. However, several found this challenging if there was a large distance between the places they were staying, particularly if they were carrying a lot of belongings. Others mentioned that they felt very anxious staying with hosts in areas they weren't familiar with and preferred to stay locally.

Young people were generally accepting of the fact they would need to move between hosts. However, several mentioned that they found this particularly difficult when there was a large distance between the places they were staying. They found it hard to negotiate long journeys, particularly while carrying all their belongings. Others mentioned that they felt very anxious staying with hosts in areas they weren't familiar with and preferred to stay locally.

***"One night I was pretty central, but the next night I was way over East [London] so I had to lug my stuff over there on the bus. I know that's just where the people were, but it's hard work." (Nightstop guest - Nightstop London )***

***"It was really stressful because I was worrying about where I was going to go. They were saying I could go to Filey or Whitby, but I'd never been to Filey or Whitby before." (Nightstop guest - Nightstop SASH)***

The distance young people have to travel is dependent on hosts' availability. If there are no hosts close, young people will have to travel to ones who are further away. To avoid long journeys for young people and placing them in areas that they are unfamiliar with, Nightstops should strive for a good geographical spread of hosts that reflects demand for the service.

## Lack of day provision in some Nightstops

Because Nightstop is a night service, young people are unable to stay with hosts during the day. This means they must vacate hosts' houses between morning and evening even if they are staying with the host for multiple nights. For young people who are attending college or working in the daytime, this is not a problem. But for those who have nowhere to be it can be a struggle to fill the hours, particularly for those who have to carry around their belongings.

As shown in the "Nightstops in practice" section above, several Nightstops offer some form of day provision to young people. This may be a form of a drop-in, where young people can spend their time using the internet (e.g. to look for work) or engaging in social activities, or simply somewhere they can keep their things. The ability to access support during the day appeared to make a big difference to the young people we interviewed. Those who were left to their own devices were keen to express their dissatisfaction.

***"If your host has to be out at 7am, they can knock on the door and kick you out by five past seven and then you're not allowed back until seven in the evening! What are you meant to do all day? I've stayed in places far away from here. What if I've got no friends or family there? What am I meant to do? There were days when I walked an eight-mile walk and back."*** (Nightstop user, Nightstop Black Country)

Several of the hosts we spoke to said they felt uncomfortable sending young people out each morning, particularly during weekends or if they have no friends or family in the area. They would feel much better if there was a provision for young people during the day so they knew they had somewhere to go.

***"I'm at work and sometimes I have to leave at 7 O'Clock in the morning, I really hate chucking them out so early in the morning."***

(Nightstop host, SASH)

***"It's really awful having to send them out into the cold. We have no choice, but it would be great if I knew they weren't alone for that time or at least had somewhere to store their things."***

(Female host, Nightstop South Yorkshire)

## Lack of clarity around arrival/departure times

During interviews with hosts, there were some mentions of young people arriving late or being unaware of when they had to leave in the morning. This was sometimes difficult to manage, caused tension during placements and additional stress for hosts.

## Lengthy process to become a host

Our findings revealed that it can take a considerable length of time to become a Nightstop host. While the majority of hosts found the application process straightforward, it was delayed by formalities, such as DBS checks. Several of the hosts we interviewed found the length of time it took to become a host frustrating. All the hosts we spoke to were very understanding, but some felt that the time hosts have to wait to receive their first young person could put some people off.

***"It was fine because we really wanted to do it, but I can see how it might be an issue for some people. You sort of lose your momentum."***

(Male host, Nightstop South Yorkshire)

## Lack of move-on information

In general, hosts wanted more information about where the young people they had supported had moved on to. They understood that the detail was confidential, but would like to understand more about the difference their support had made to each person.

***"Sometimes we [know where they've gone] but not always. It would be great to have that information. It would make it even more worthwhile somehow to know that they've gone back home or found somewhere permanent to live. Even if it's just for one night, you get to know them and really care, so it would be good to know a bit more about what happens."***

(Male host, Nightstop Bristol)

## Inaccurate information from referring agency about young person

When hosts were given inaccurate information about a young person, this tended to be because the information the Nightstop had received from the referring agency was also inaccurate. For a safe and effective service to be provided to young people, it is essential that all referral information – particularly that which feeds into risk assessments – is accurate and complete.

## Social value case studies

Homelessness can have a significant long-term impact on government finances, the economy and local communities, as well as on the people who experience homelessness themselves. For example, research collated by Homeless Link<sup>15</sup> suggests that homelessness has a considerable impact on the public purse. The research indicates that:

- The average cost of an A&E hospital visit is £147; four out of 10 experiencing homelessness have used A&E in last six month
- £1,668 is the average cost per arrest; seven out of 10 homeless ex-offenders are reconvicted within one year
- £26,000 is the estimated average cost of a homeless person each year to the public purse
- £1billion is the estimated annual cost of homelessness

These figures are for all homelessness in the UK, including low-risk people (such as those who might be supported by a Nightstop service) and people with much more significant, complex needs.

We have put together three case studies that give an indication of the Social Value that the work of Nightstop can create. The case studies examine specific Nightstop cases to explore the impact on young people and society. They seek to quantify the potential social value that Nightstop can create through supporting young people away from homelessness and towards secure accommodation. There are three case studies, which focus on Nightstop's impact on young people's mental health, employment and physical health respectively. We chose to explore the value linked to changes we had the most evidence for in our evaluation – mental health, employment and physical safety. While they haven't been considered here, several other outcomes of Nightstop are likely to also have considerable social value.

<sup>15</sup> See: <https://www.homeless.org.uk/facts/understanding-homelessness/impact-of-homelessness>

## Case Study 1: Mental Health

Worry, fear, depression and anxiety are all things that young people spoke about when describing their experiences for this evaluation. Some spoke about having considered ending their own lives.

For this case study, we consider a Nightstop user who was living in an environment that had a significant negative impact on their mental health (such as an abusive household, or a shelter where other residents were using drugs and they [the Nightstop user] feared for their safety). The Nightstop experience gave them a way to escape this situation, take some time out, make a considered decision about their future, and to access more suitable accommodation. This led to a significant improvement in their mental health. This case study explores the social value created by the improvement in mental health in this scenario.

New Economy Manchester's *Unit Cost Database*<sup>16</sup> highlights the main fiscal costs (i.e. the costs to public services) and economic costs (i.e. impact on the economy) that are paid when an adult suffers from depression and/or anxiety disorders.

- The costs to the NHS (paid by the clinical commissioning groups): £899 per person per year<sup>17</sup>. This includes prescribed drugs, inpatient care, GP costs and other NHS services.<sup>18</sup>
- The costs to local authorities (paid by social services): £78 per person per year. This includes supported accommodation and social services costs.
- The economic value of £4,522 per person per year. This represents lost earnings to the individual.<sup>19</sup>

These costs represent an average across all adults suffering from depression and/or anxiety. The research suggests that one-third of those affected are not in contact with any services, so the costs will be significantly higher for those who are receiving support.

We also explored the value created for the individual whose mental health improved. This involved identifying a monetary representation of the value to the individual, rather than the NHS, of improved mental health.

For this report we have drawn on research from the Centre for Mental Health. The Centre for Mental Health has put a value on the social costs of mental health problems.<sup>20</sup> Their report highlights research into the effects of mental health problems on a person's overall health (referred to as their *health status*). It uses a measure of health status called a Quality Adjusted Life Years (QALYs), which incorporates a person's *length* of life, and *quality* of life.

<sup>16</sup> New Economy Manchester (updated 2015), Unit Cost Database (v.1.4), <http://www.neweconomymanchester.com/our-work/research-evaluation-cost-benefit-analysis/cost-benefit-analysis/unit-cost-database>

<sup>17</sup> The report collates figures from a variety of sources across several years. Costs are all converted to 2015 prices for consistency. The 2015 prices are quoted here.

<sup>18</sup> King's Fund (2008), *Paying the Price: the cost of mental health care in England to 2026*, p.118, 25 and 40, <https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/paying-price>, cited in New Economy Manchester

<sup>19</sup> New Economy Manchester

<sup>20</sup> Centre for Mental Health (2003), *Economic and social costs of mental illness in England*, <https://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/economic-and-social-costs-2003>. The original report in 2003 was updated in 2009/10, although the per-person figures for social costs did not change in the update.

QALYs are defined by NICE (the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence) as "a measure of the state of health of a person or group in which the benefits, in terms of length of life, are adjusted to reflect the quality of life. One QALY is equal to one year of life in perfect health."<sup>21</sup> So if a medical intervention leads to an individual "gaining" a QALY, this could mean a number of things. It might mean that the individual is expected to live one year longer, and that one year of life will be lived in perfect health. More realistically, they may live two years longer, and those two years will be lived at 50% health. Or their life expectancy may not change at all, but the final five years of life will be lived at a 20% health.

The Centre for Mental Health's report shows how much a person's health status is affected by having poor mental health. It shows that the average loss of health status is 0.098 QALYs for an individual with a moderate mental health condition,<sup>22</sup> and 0.352 of a QALY for an individual with a severe mental health condition.<sup>23</sup> This means that the difference between a person with perfect mental health, and a person with a Level 3 mental health condition, is 0.352 QALYs per year (assuming that there are no other health differences between the two).

QALYs are commonly used within the health sector in the UK when deciding if medical interventions represent good value for money. Very roughly, a medical intervention is judged to be good value for money if it costs less than £30,000<sup>24</sup> for every QALY it creates for the patient. This is known as a cost-effectiveness threshold. It means that, in theory, the NHS would be prepared to pay up to £30,000 for each QALY created by for a patient by a medical intervention.

We have valued the impact on an individual's mental health by looking at the impact on their health status (0.098 QALYs for a moderate mental health condition, or 0.352 QALYs for a severe mental health condition), and combined this with the cost-effectiveness threshold of £30,000 per QALY outlined above. This gives a value of mental health of £2,940<sup>25</sup> for a Level 2 mental health condition, or £10,560<sup>26</sup> for a Level 3 mental health condition, per person per year.

These figures have been used to estimate the value created for Nightstop service users. Two further judgments were made in estimating the value:

- The economic value for avoiding lost earnings has not been included; the future employment status of Nightstop service users is likely to be affected by a range of factors, we felt that it was not credible to claim the total of £4,522 for all of those Nightstop users whose mental health improves
- The case study uses the lower figure for the social cost; it is more likely that Nightstop helps individuals avoid lower level mental health conditions.

In total, this suggests that if Nightstop can help an individual avoid depression and/or anxiety, this can lead to resource savings of £899 per year for the NHS and £78 per year to local authorities, and social value to the individual of £2,940.

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.nice.org.uk/glossary?letter=q>

<sup>22</sup> i.e. a 'Level 2' mental health problem: some problems, moderately anxious or depressed

<sup>23</sup> i.e. a 'Level 3' mental health problem: severe problems, or extremely anxious

<sup>24</sup> The cost-effectiveness threshold is usually given as £20,000-£30,000. We have used the upper threshold here.

<sup>25</sup> 0.098 QALYs per person per year x £30,000 per QALY = £2,940 per person per year.

<sup>26</sup> 0.352 QALYs per person per year x £30,000 per QALY = £10,560 per person per year.

Within research it is important to note how much of the change made, can be credited to that particular intervention. This is known as “attribution”. Our research with young people suggests that they would give Nightstop around 59% of the credit (or “attribution”) for the changes they have experienced in their lives.<sup>27</sup> We have, therefore, assumed that 59% of the social value can be attributed to Nightstop. This would mean that for each person that Nightstop supports to improve their mental health, Nightstop can take credit for resource savings of £530 per year for the NHS and £50 per year to local authorities, and social value for the individual of over £1,700 per year.<sup>28</sup> This suggests that when Nightstop is supporting a young person with mental health issues, and those issues are reduced, Nightstop creates a total value of around £2,300 per person per year.

### Case Study 2: Employment

Homelessness, or lack of fixed, secure accommodation, can make gaining a job, or holding down a job, extremely difficult. Factors such as lack of sleep, and inability to shower and wear clean clothes, means that employment is not possible for many.

For this case study, we consider a Nightstop user who was living on the streets, or taking measures such as attending all-night parties every night as a way of avoiding sleeping rough. The impact on their health and well-being during the day means that they drop out of college, and are unable to successfully interview for a job, and certainly not hold down a job.

Engaging with Nightstop gave this person a space where they could sleep much better, improve their personal appearance by showering and wearing clean clothes, and in time to get a part-time job, potentially avoiding long-term unemployment.

The Young Foundation’s *Framework of Outcomes for Young People* argues that “It is well recognised that not supporting young people to thrive and achieve longer-term positive life outcomes has a significant cost implication for the public purse – research from the University of York, for example, identified the ‘lifetime costs of being NEET [Not in employment, education or training]’ as £12billion for the 16-17-year-old cohort.”<sup>29</sup>

Table 8 shows some of the “lifetime costs” referenced above, derived from the University of York report. The cost per NEET is a figure derived from the “total cost” outlined. The report estimates the cost using two methodologies (Public Finance Cost and Resource Cost), and gives low and high estimates for each; all of these variations are shown below.

The costs outlined above are for 16-17-year-olds, whereas Nightstop supports young people up to 25 years old. However, the figures still give an indication of the kinds of economic costs that can be incurred when young people are outside of education or the workforce for a length of time. This case study draws on the smallest of these figures, the “low estimate public finance cost”, to estimate savings that can be created for government

27 The young people taking the Nightstop survey were asked how much of the change (if any) they felt was due to Nightstop. They had the options of “All of it”, “Most of it”, “About half of it”, “A small part of it”, “None of it”, or “Don’t know / NA”. These answers were converted into percentages as follows: “All of it” = 100%, “Most of it” = 75%, “About half of it” = 50%, “A small part of it” = 25%. “Don’t know / NA” answers were not converted into a percentage. Once the answers had been converted into percentages, the average (mean) attribution could be calculated. This was 59%

28 £899 x 59% = £530. £78 x 59% = £50. £2,940 x 59% = £1,700. Figures rounded.

29 Young Foundation (2012), citing: University of York (2010): Estimating the life-time cost of NEET: 16-18-year-olds not in Education, Employment or Training, Research Undertaken for the Audit Commission, Bob Coles, Christine Godfrey, Antonia Keung, Steven Parrott and Jonathan Bradshaw

Cost per NEET		Public Finance Cost		Resource Cost	
		Low Estimate	High Estimate	Low Estimate	High Estimate
Short Term	Unemployed	£5,760	£5,760	£381	£381
	Underemployed			£154	£154
	Unemployment			£2,064	£2,064
	Inactivity			£3,682	£3,682
	Teenage mothers	£2,180	£2,180	£2,079	£2,079
	Crime	£38	£38	£295	£295
	Poor health	£2	£2	£2	£2
	Substance misuse	£6	£6	£6	£6
Medium Term	Educational Underachievement & Unemployment	£34,660	£134,250	£91,983	£356,287
	Early Motherhood	£10,449	£10,449	£1,359	£1,359
	Crime	£323	£323	£2,215	£2,215
	Poor Health	£37	£37	£37	£37
Long Term	Substance abuse	£55	£55	£55	£55
	Tax loss	£1,841	£1,841	-	-
	Additional benefits	£899	£899	-	-

Table 8: Costs of NEET to the Government (Cost per NEET)

resources.<sup>30</sup> Specifically, this kind of saving might be created if Nightstop supports a young person into a situation where they can gain employment, and helps them avoid a situation where their lack of safe, suitable accommodation leads to them being out of work for a long period of time.

Alongside the benefits to government, there are benefits to individuals of being employed. The Housing Associations’ Charitable Trust (HACT) has used a valuation methodology called the Wellbeing Valuation Approach to put values on a range of social outcomes, including employment outcomes.<sup>31</sup> This values the well-being impact to an individual of being in employment at £10,767 for full-time employment, and £1,229 for part-time employment. The young people we spoke to in the research who had gained employment, or were likely to gain employment, were sometimes looking at part-time work, sometimes full-time work. To avoid over-claiming, we have assumed in this case study that the part-time employment figure is a more realistic valuation for the young people supported by Nightstop than the full-time employment figure.

Combining these approaches allows us to value the impact of supporting a Nightstop client into long-term employment as £1,229 per year for the individual, with lifetime costs of around £56,000 for the government.

30 The lowest figure was chosen to ensure that the analysis is credible and realistic. It helps avoid the risk that the values here overclaim the value due to different age ranges (the values shown are for 16-17-year-olds who are NEET, rather than young people up to 25)

31 HACT (2014), Measuring the Social Impact of Community Investment: A Guide to using the Wellbeing Valuation Approach <http://www.hact.org.uk/measuring-social-impact-community-investment-guide-using-wellbeing-valuation-approach>

Our research with young people suggests that they would give Nightstop around 59% of the credit (or “attribution”) for the changes they have experienced in their lives. We have, therefore, assumed that 59% of the social value can be attributed to Nightstop. Because long-term employment is affected by a number of factors, we feel that it is not realistic for Nightstop to claim credit for 59% of the whole life-time savings created by not being unemployed. Instead we have assumed the service is responsible for 59% of the short-term share of the costs outlined Table 8, i.e. £7,986.

This would mean that for each person that Nightstop supports to gain employment, Nightstop can take credit for cost savings of around £4,700 for the Government, and social value for the individual of over £700.<sup>32</sup> This gives a total value of just under £5,500 per person.

### Case Study 3: Physical safety

Sleeping in unsafe accommodation, or on the streets, can leave young people vulnerable to violence and abuse. Those in this situation can find themselves victims of theft, violence or sexual exploitation.

For this case study, we consider a Nightstop user who was staying with people relatively unknown to them, in a house where lots of people would come and go, and where alcohol use and drug-taking were common. This placed them at risk of violence; a Crisis report in 2016 showed that 35% of rough sleepers have been deliberately hit or kicked or experienced some other form of violence while homeless.<sup>33</sup> Nightstop enabled them to escape the situation, and live somewhere where they are no longer at physical risk. This case study explores the social value created by the improvement in physical safety in this scenario.

New Economy Manchester’s *Unit Cost Database* highlights the main fiscal costs (i.e. the costs to public services), economic costs (i.e. impact on the economy) and social costs (impact on the individual) that occur when someone is a victim of domestic violence. Many of the costs may well not be apply in this situation, for example the costs to the local authority’s social services or housing services. Other costs are outlined below on a per-incident basis.

- The costs to the NHS (paid by Acute Trusts / Hospitals): £1,345 per incident. This includes hospital and ambulance costs, mental health agencies, prescription costs, and GP costs.<sup>34</sup>
- The costs to police: £477 per incident.
- The costs to the criminal justice system (paid by social services): £667 per incident. This includes prosecution services, courts, probation and prisons, and civil and legal costs. It excludes police, which are covered above.
- The economic value of £1,692 per incident. This is based on cost to the victim of £940, and to the employer of £752, related to time off work due to injuries (and also, for individuals, travel/lost wages for GP visits, prescription charges, the cost of setting up new homes/re-possession following divorce and separation due to DV, and civil/legal costs).

<sup>32</sup> £7,986 x 59% = £4,700. £1,229 x 59% = £700. Figures rounded.

<sup>33</sup> Crisis (2016), press release: <https://www.crisis.org.uk/about-us/media-centre/crisis-reveals-scale-of-violence-and-abuse-against-rough-sleepers-as-charity-opens-its-doors-for-christmas/>

<sup>34</sup> Sylvia Walby (2009), *The Cost of Domestic violence*, p.8, [http://www.lanacs.ac.uk/fass/doc\\_library/sociology/Cost\\_of\\_domestic\\_violence\\_update.doc](http://www.lanacs.ac.uk/fass/doc_library/sociology/Cost_of_domestic_violence_update.doc), cited in New Economy Manchester

- The social value to the individual, valued £7,803 per incident. This is based upon the human and emotional cost associated with domestic violence

The economic value (covering issues such as lost earnings to the employer and employee, and relocation costs) are not included in this estimate. This is because it is unlikely that the individual in our case study is in work (see case study above), and relocation costs are not likely to apply to someone who currently has no secure accommodation.

For the purposes of this case study, we have assumed that 35% of Nightstop users would have been at significant risk of violence, based on the 35% figure from Crisis (cited above). We assume that these 35% would have avoided one incident of violence each.

Combining these approaches allows us to value the impact of supporting a Nightstop client so they avoid an incident of domestic violence as £7,803 per year for the individual, and £2,489 for the Government.

Our research with young people suggests that they would give Nightstop around 59% of the credit (or “attribution”) for the changes they have experienced in their lives. We have, therefore, assumed that 59% of the social value can be attributed to Nightstop.

This would mean that for each person that Nightstop supports to improve their physical safety, Nightstop can take credit for resource savings of nearly £1,500 for the Government, and social value for the individual of £4,600.<sup>35</sup> This gives a total value of around £2,300 per incident of violence avoided.

### Case Study conclusions

1,388 young people were placed with a Nightstop host in 2017 in the UK. Our online survey gives an indication of the proportion of young people who benefited from improved mental health through their self-esteem improving, and the proportion who benefited from improved personal safety. The raw data from the research suggests that:

- 40% (14 out of 35) gained improved self-esteem
- 88% (30 out of 34) gained improved personal safety

In line with the Crisis research, we have assumed that 35% of Nightstop users are at significant risk of violence. If 88% of this 35% gained improved personal safety, then we can conclude that 31% of Nightstop users were originally at significant risk of violence, and have now gained improved personal safety.<sup>36</sup>

We can therefore conclude that 40% of young people on Nightstop gained improved self esteem and therefore improved mental health.

We can also conclude that 31% of young people on Nightstop gained improved personal safety.

<sup>35</sup> £2,489 x 59% = £1,500. £7,803 x 59% = £4,600. Figures rounded.

<sup>36</sup> 88% x 35% = 31%

The table below combines our social value estimates. The base size for the survey is low, so these results should be treated with caution. In addition, getting a credible estimate for the number of people who have been helped into employment was beyond the scope of the research, so the social value created through employment is not included here.

	Social Value per young person	No. of young people this applies to:	Total social value attributed to Nightstop UK created
Mental health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>£2,940 for the individual</li> <li>£899 for the NHS,</li> <li>£78 for local authorities</li> </ul>	40% x 1,388 = 555	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>c. £1.6million for young people</li> <li>c. £500,000 for the NHS</li> <li>c. £50,000 for local authorities</li> </ul>
Physical safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>£7,803 for the individual,</li> <li>£2,489 for the Government</li> </ul>	31% x 1,388 = 430	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>c. £3.4million for young people,</li> <li>c. £1.1million for the Government</li> </ul>

The estimate of the total social value created by Nightstop through improved mental health and improved physical safety is as follows:

As for the individual case studies, we have assumed that 59% of the total social value shown above can be attributed to Nightstop.<sup>37</sup>

Our calculations suggest that around £6.6million of social value was created by the Nightstop Network in 2017 through improved mental health and improved physical safety alone. Of this, around £4million is directly attributable to Nightstop.

<sup>37</sup> However, for the savings to the Government created by avoiding unemployment, we are only claiming 59 percent of the short-term costs. We are not claiming credit for the medium or long-term costs.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This evaluation suggests that Nightstop is providing a highly valuable service to young people experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness. In addition to having a safe place to sleep, young people experience a range of short and long-term outcomes that may have a considerable impact on their lives, and on the public purse.

The following recommendations are based on our findings as well as our experience of undertaking the evaluation.

### Recommendations for service delivery

#### Number and variety of hosts

We found that whilst Nightstops generally had enough hosts available to accommodate those who need the service, the distance young people need to travel between hosts is often considerable and successful matching of young people to hosts with similar interests (something that can improve some outcomes) is not always possible. As well as aiming to recruit as many hosts as possible, it would be useful for Nightstops to have a good variety of hosts on their books in terms of:

- Geographic location
- Weekly availability
- Basic demographics (e.g. age and gender)
- Interests

Our findings showed that hosts tend to be older females living alone or with another adult. Nightstops may benefit from targeting other demographic groups to improve the diversity of their host base. Those with experience of working in the homelessness sector or with young people seem to be a particularly receptive group.

#### Host application process

The hosts who contributed to our evaluation were generally very pleased with the support they had from local Nightstops. Where there was criticism it tended to be in relation to the length of time it took to become a Nightstop host. A good proportion of the delay to the process was related to the length of time it takes for hosts to be DBS checked. There is little that can be done about this. Nightstops would benefit, however, from streamlining the rest of the process (e.g. training and house visits) as much as possible to avoid unnecessary delays. Hosts should also be given plenty of warning that it could take a number of months before they are able to have a young person stay with them.

### **Adequate and accurate information**

Where suggestions for improvement were made or potential barriers identified, this was often in relation to information that was shared throughout the Nightstop process. There was evidence that outcomes could be improved and (potentially serious) complications avoided with clearer information:

- to Nightstops from referring agencies about the young people being referred
- to young people about the hosts they will be staying with
- to hosts about the young people they are accommodating
- to hosts about where the young people they have accommodation have moved-on to
- to hosts and young people about the practicalities of each stay (e.g. arrival and departure times)
- to young people about where to go in the day (including services provided by Nightstops and partner agencies)

### **Recommendations for data collection and evaluation**

#### **Improved central monitoring**

The data available for this evaluation was very limited. This was partly because there is no reliable way for Nightstop UK to centrally monitor the activities of Nightstops and/or the outcomes that are achieved.

Nightstop UK would benefit from a new central database that Nightstops could use to record the work they do, including referrals, safe nights and move-on information. This would allow for more accurate evaluation of the service in the future.

It is likely that some Nightstops (particularly those run by larger organisations) will always prefer to record their activity on their own systems. In these cases, systems for effectively transferring relevant data to Nightstop UK should be established.

#### **Improved consent for information sharing**

Our ability to assess outcomes for young people was limited by the fact that users of a number of Nightstops had not given their permission for their data to be shared with the Nightstop Network. We would recommend that consent documentation is reviewed so that young people are able to opt in (or out) of evaluation and research activities when they engage with the Nightstop service.

If more young people had provided their consent for us to contact them, it is likely that our sample for the online survey would have been higher. This would have improved the accuracy of our findings.





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