

FAQs for Local Authorities

Can you provide a summary of what Beam does?

Beam is a social enterprise that innovatively tackles the root causes of inequality, by supporting individuals experiencing or at risk of homelessness into employment and the private rented sector.

Beam partners with local authorities to provide long term, sustained support by removing the financial barriers that prevent its service-users from starting work. These barriers can include access to laptops, training, childcare, equipment, deposits and rent in advance.

Beam's flexible fundraising model removes these financial barriers quickly; on average it takes less than a month to fund an average fundraising total of £3,000.

Beam does not only offer financial help, it also facilitates engagement from the service-users it supports, empowering individuals to tell their story and providing access to an online community of supporters and peers, where service-users can view confidence-building messages from supporters, and join peer networks. Each service-user receives an average 17 support messages for each fundraising campaign.

Why do you want to bring in Beam's provision now?

Loss of job is one of the leading structural reasons for people becoming homeless. These numbers are set to steeply increase as a series of conditions create unprecedented levels of hardship across the most disadvantaged areas of society:

- A 'cost of living crisis' that sees inflation making even basic goods unaffordable
- Slow trickle effects of the end of the eviction ban and the reduction in extra welfare introduced during the benefits
- Increasing rents while Local Housing Allowance benefit rates remain static

Through consulting with partners supporting residents, two key barriers were identified to their service-users getting into jobs and leaving homelessness:

- i. Financial barriers: the cost of getting into work or the rental sector (e.g. finding and using a laptop, a landlord, or a cash rental deposit) are often prohibitively high
- ii. Support barriers: the service-users often have support needs and require more personalised support than most employability services are equipped to provide.

Overview of Beam's service

Beam fundraises to overcome financial barriers to employment and provides tenancy support for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness by removing all financial barriers on their fundraising site (<https://beam.org/campaigns>) through donations from members of the public.

The service provides end-to-end, personalised support into skilled, secure and well-paid jobs and PRS tenancies. The journey of a Beam service-user has these stages:

- i. The service-user is referred to Beam by a charity partner or local authority.
- ii. A Beam employee is assigned to the service-user as a personal case worker who provides personalised 1-2-1 support for at least 13 weeks. Together, service-users and their caseworker create an Action Plan ensuring the employment and housing plan is

- sustainable. They also compile a personal budget which will lead to employment and affordable housing.
- iii. Allows us to work at speed and embed in other interventions once BEAM end support with individual clients.
 - iv. Beam removes all financial barriers on their fundraising site (<https://beam.org/campaigns>) through donations from members of the public. All costs are covered, including the cost of training courses and rental deposits, as well as other requirements including equipment, travel, moving costs and childcare, and listed transparently on the website. The average fundraising campaign is £3,000. As well as financial support, messages of support from members of the public also have an important motivational effect on Beam's service-users.
 - v. Once the funds have been raised, Beam pays for the budget items listed on the website (no cash is given to service-users) and the service-user attends employment training, work preparation groups or tenancy training. Throughout the journey, one-to-one support continues at the level required by the service-user.
 - vi. The service-user is supported to find full-time work or PRS tenancies. Support includes CV and interview preparation and connections to prospective employers. Beam has partnerships with a variety of employers (e.g. Bupa, Royal Mail, Waitrose). For tenancies, support involves property search skills, home safety and tips for viewings.

Overview of Beam's outcomes

- Beam has worked with over 1,200 service-users
- 100% of service-users' campaigns fund on time
- 90% of Beam's donations come from monthly subscriptions split equally between all fundraising campaigns
- Over 80% of service users begin employment of which over 80% have sustained for at least 3 months
- 73% of service users move into a rented home of which over 93% have sustained for at least 6 months

What are the benefits of Beam's approach?

1. People who are homeless and at risk of homelessness get into skilled, secure and well-paid work or long-term stable PRS tenancies
2. Local authorities and Central Government save money in support costs (e.g. costs of temporary accommodation and increased council tax revenue)
3. High levels of investment (average of £3,000 via the fundraising) are made in disadvantaged people that would otherwise be unaffordable
4. Members of the public are engaged and educated in helping people in their community.

What is the history of Beam's work to date?

Beam launched in late 2017 and is a nationwide service, delivering with over 30 local authorities across England, Scotland and Wales. Over half of local authorities across London are using the service. Beam is also partnered with the DWP.

What is the aim of the pilot?

Beam have proposed a pilot in which they will work with our residents who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The aim is to fundraise employment training and support, which will help them into skilled, secure and well-paid work and/or PRS tenancies.

The aim of the pilot will be, primarily, to get our residents into skilled, secure work and secondarily, for them to prevent or relieve homelessness. This will improve outcomes for residents who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, and reduce the financial burden of homelessness on the council.

How many people will join the pilot?

The programme will include a pilot of 20 service-users from Chichester joining Beam over a 6-month period. This will include ongoing support.

The local authority and Beam will co-create an action plan to identify which local services will refer in to Beam for the pilot. Beam will actively engage with these services to accept referrals of residents who may be suitable for the pilot. The number of programme spaces applies to people who join Beam, rather than referrals.

What are the pilot's Key Performance Indicators?

- i. Number of service-users commencing paid work
- ii. Number of service-users sustaining paid work for 6 months?
- iii. Number of service-users leaving temporary accommodation or preventing homelessness
- iv. Number of service-users moving into the private rental sector
- v. Number of service-users sustaining in the private rental sector for a 12 month period?
- vi. Money raised through fundraising for service-users
- vii. Number of service-users commencing education and/or training.
- viii. Number of service-users sustaining education and/or training for 6 months.

How does Beam provide social value?

By reducing spend on temporary accommodation, the pilot is expected to lead to cashable savings of £5.23 for every £1 spent on the pilot. There is also an increase in council tax revenue when service-users begin work and cost avoidance as Beam fundraises for deposits and rent in advance, saving the council further money. With the introduction of Beam, the housing team will have more capacity to support their cohort of service users.

Can you provide more detail on Beam's employment support?

Beam provides innovative, end-to-end employment support for each service-user using custom-built technology to support those far from the workforce in pursuing a diverse range of quality career pathways.

Service-users are coached on finding and applying to jobs using modern job search platforms like Indeed and Adzuna. The Beam Member Hub also provides tailored job matches for our service-users. service-users can 'like' jobs that they are interested in applying to and then directly apply to them quickly and easily.

Service-users are guided on how to create professional CVs and cover letters that showcase their skills and experiences positively during CV building sessions. Beam's custom-built digital CV-building tool enables service-users to create CVs from scratch easily, even when they have low digital capabilities. This is ideal for those facing homelessness who may have little time or capacity to create one on their own. Our caseworkers will also conduct several mock interviews tailored to the service-user's desired career path and provide service-users with specific, constructive feedback. This builds their confidence and self-belief enabling them to enter interviews prepared.

Can you provide more detail on Beam's housing support?

Beam provides specialist support and training around house-hunting, property viewings, tenancy paperwork and tenancy sustainment. Once a service-user moves into their new, rented home, in-tenancy support is provided for 6 months after a tenancy starts.

Beam has developed their own self-serve, accessible tools that drastically improve the house-hunting experience for service-users, including by simplifying budgeting, bedroom eligibility, the paperwork process and compliance process, and how to make success of your tenancy

Beam offers tailored and specialist training, including how to use popular online property marketplaces (e.g. OpenRent, Zoopla, Rightmove, etc.); how to give a positive impression to letting agents or landlords; what to look for in a viewing; how to sustain a tenancy; how to update Universal Credit following a move; etc.

Beam has a best-in-class matching algorithm that tailors "property matches" to service-user-specified housing needs

Beam provides sustainment training provided by a landlord with 20+ years residential property experience. Beam also have exclusive access to a range of lettings agents, independent landlords, portfolio landlords, and property developers, catering to a range of properties, from shared rooms to 4+ bed houses, nationwide.

How do service-users receive support from the Beam community?

All service-users become members of the Beam community where they have the chance to tell their story (if they choose) and connect with like-minded peers, progressive employers and an empathetic public. We have found this support hugely motivating for service-users who have said it helped them to remain focused with their job search and continue engaging with services.

Service-users will have exclusive access to the Beam Member Hub; a custom-built online platform that all our service-users have access to and are trained in using. It is an easy-to-use tool that allows service-users to directly communicate with their caseworker; see their upcoming meetings; 'swipe' through jobs that match their preferences and skills; and connect with a wide community of peers and the public. The Member Hub utilises a social media-like design that is engaging and accessible.

We also send automatic SMS and WhatsApp messages to service-users to notify them of jobs that match their skills and preferences and remind them of their caseworker 1-2-1s. Since using WhatsApp we have seen improved engagement, attendance rates and application success as the application is popular and accessible amongst our service-user cohort.

Service-users will also be supported by Beam's highly experienced caseworkers who have a diverse range of lived experiences and qualifications. All caseworkers understand that this cohort faces a variety of barriers in securing stable, high-quality employment. Our caseworkers are specialists at managing service-users who express distrust in services, low motivation, and self-esteem.

Do you collect feedback from the individuals using Beam's service?

To ensure a positive experience we constantly receive and review feedback from our service-users, referrers, and employers to make quick improvements to our service. This includes both short, quick 'NPS' questions (Net Promoter Scores) and longer form interviews and questionnaires to capture more qualitative feedback.

To date, we have scored:

- 9.6 out of 10 - Average rating of Beam experience from service-users
- 9.5 out of 10 - Average rating from referrers
- 7.9 out of 10 - Average job satisfaction

How is performance and activity monitored?

The pilot will have a dedicated Delivery Manager, who will be available for contact at any point to share information on Beam's processes and the progress of our service-users. Regular monthly monitoring meetings will be held to share performance including individual case studies, progress against KPI's, feedback and troubleshooting any challenges.

Outside of regular monitoring meetings, information will be shared through individual and group emails. For each service-user, automated emails with their progress will be sent to the referrer so they can be updated on their progress. For the wider performance of the provision, quarterly dashboards will be sent, tracking metrics and highlighting service-user stories.