

Stacey Dooley aims to highlight plight of Blackpool's homeless

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A charity which helps homeless youngsters in Blackpool is to feature in a documentary highlighting projects funded by Children In Need.

Broadcaster and Strictly Come Dancing contestant Stacey Dooley's programme The Young and Homeless will focus on Streetlife, which works closely with Blackpool Council's Housing Options team.

It follows 18-year-old Josh, over a six month period as he spends his nights on the streets of Blackpool in night shelters or sofa surfing, while holding down a job at a take-away and trying to secure permanent accommodation.

ADVERTISING

Streetlife, whose shelter next to St John's Church provides eight emergency beds for 16 to 25-year-olds, has received £99,500 across three years from BBC Children in Need to employ a full-time youth worker.

The role ensures homeless teenagers get one-to-one support to help them get their lives back on track.

Jane Hugo, chief executive of Streetlife, said: "The funding is crucial. Without that support we could have vulnerable young people in Blackpool not knowing where to turn to.

"When people come to Streetlife they have exhausted all their family networks.

“Without us they would be at risk of exploitation and all the risks of being out on the street at that age.

“Children in Need has funded a youth worker which is important because we get people aged 16 to 18 who have been passed from pillar to post.

“Sometimes they are care leavers, or have suffered family breakdown.

“We link in very closely with the local authority to make sure they are aware of what is happening, and our youth worker Rachel is also our safeguarding officer.” Documentary-makers began filming in Blackpool in March.

Jane added: “It’s good because people can see the support Children in Need gets nationally is helping people locally.”

Streetlife’s current grant from Children in Needs ends next May and the charity is hoping to secure further funding.

The programme also follows young homeless people from Manchester and Devon.

Stacey Dooley said: “Our film for BBC Children in Need, shares stories from some incredible teenagers from across the UK facing the struggles of finding a stable roof over their heads.

“I am so grateful to all of the brave young people involved and hope their honesty will go on to start a really important conversation about today’s homeless young people.”

Stacey Dooley: The Young and Homeless is on BBC One at 10.45pm on Tuesday.