Kairos Housing
Independent Living & Wellbeing Programme

Interim Progress Report (Sept - Nov 2025)
Completed by L Norcross 5/11/25

I. Executive Summary

The Wellbeing & Independent Living Programme has been designed and delivered in consultation between Steven McCluskie (Focus and Fly CIC) and Kairos Housing. It was launched in September 2025 as a six-month pilot.

The programme was directly designed in response to Kairos Housing guest's feedback for greater community integration and support, as highlighted in the **Open University Residents' Experience Report (May 2024)**. This initiative is trauma-informed and proactive, providing essential practical skills training, psychosocial support, and community engagement for guests facing complex trauma and housing precarity.

In the first two months, the project has successfully:

1. **Established a structure**: Implemented weekly Housing (Independent Living) and Wellbeing Workshops with strong guest engagement.
2. **Driven Practical Outcomes**: Secured volunteering roles (e.g., at the Foodbank and ARC) and provided intensive support for job readiness (e.g., in social care).
3. **Fostered Psycho-Social Growth**: Helped guests to articulate a profound sense of 'real family,' 'regained hope,' and increased self-confidence, directly counteracting the negative mental health toll of housing precarity identified by the OU Report.

II. Strategic Rationale for the Programme

The Independent Living & Wellbeing Programme was created to address crucial service gaps identified by both guest feedback and academic research:

1. Responding to Guest Needs (The OU Report Mandate)

The OU's May 2024 report on residents' experiences at Kairos highlighted key issues that this programme directly addresses:

- **Mental Health Impact:** Housing worries and precarity have a "negative toll on residents' mental health." (OU Report).
- **Need for Belonging:** Residents desire a full role in society and thrive on the "sense of family" and "self-worth" provided by Kairos Housing staff. The programme is a formal mechanism to sustain this vital

relational support.

- **Desire for Activity:** The project was specifically designed to satisfy guest requests for more social trips and activities, offering a positive counter-narrative to their isolated experience.

2. Trauma-Informed Delivery

As articulated in the Initial Proposal, the delivery by Focus and Fly CIC is rooted in a trauma-informed approach, utilizing the 'Five Ways to Wellbeing' framework. This is crucial for guests who have experienced significant trauma and are living in a state of hyper-precarity (as per Solberg et al., 2021, cited in the OU Report's bibliography). By focusing on 'Connecting,' 'Learning,' and 'Giving,' the programme rebuilds agency and resilience.

III. Programme Delivery & Key Outcomes

The programme is delivered two days per week (16 hours in total) and integrates practical skills with therapeutic, community-focused activities.

1. Independent Living Skill Development (Housing Matters)

Sessions provide the foundational knowledge necessary for guests to successfully transition to independent living, thereby boosting their confidence and stability.

Topic	Example
Financial Literacy	Budgeting Workshop focusing on essential outgoing costs and saving strategies.
Utility Management	Dedicated session covering the complexities of managing gas, electric, water and Council Tax.
Housing Rights	Workshops covering tenancy agreements, deposit protection schemes, and landlord/tenant repair responsibilities.
Administrative Support	Weekly destitution payment distribution is now linked to group engagement.

2. Integration and Volunteering Progress

The project has achieved tangible progress in engaging guests in community life and improving their employability prospects:

Guest	Progress Highlight
S A	Actively volunteering with both Kairos Housing and ARC. Staff

	secured a referral to the Blackburn Foodbank for regular support.
N H	Identified an interest in social care/neuro-divergent support. Staff actively coordinating with the Blackburn Rovers Community Trust to arrange a specific volunteer placement in this area.
W D	Now volunteering to support others at ARC and attending ESOL classes, successfully giving back to the community.

3. Psychosocial Impact (Qualitative Feedback)

The most compelling justification for continuation comes from the qualitative feedback, which directly validates the programme's trauma-informed approach:

Guest	Direct Quote/Feedback	Key Outcome
D	"The Kairos group has given me the sense of a real family—guiding me towards new paths in life and helping me regain hope and purpose."	Overcoming trauma-induced isolation and replacing precarity with belonging.
Multiple Guests	Sessions are consistently described as having a "warm and friendly atmosphere where everyone feels truly included."	Building confidence and connection, achieving a positive counter-narrative to negative rhetoric.
Group Activity	A successful Manchester trip (Science and Industry Museum) and a collaborative Community Speaking session in Rossendale helped integrate guests into British culture and gave them a platform to share their stories.	Fulfilling the explicit request for trips and community participation.

IV. Conclusion and Future Need

The Wellbeing & Independent Living Programme has demonstrated immediate and measurable success in its pilot phase. It is not merely an amenity; it is an essential, evidence-based intervention that mitigates the severe mental health consequences of precarity and trauma while actively equipping guests for stability and independence.

To maintain momentum and secure these vital outcomes for guests, continuation funding is urgently required beyond the initial trial period (ending February 2026).

Key Funding Priorities:

- **Programme Continuation:** Funding to secure the core delivery model for the next 12 months.
- **Wellbeing Hub Equipment:** One-off capital costs to equip the new hub at the Cathedral (e.g., secure charging station, window screening, folding tables) to provide a safe, functional, and consistent space for all sessions.
- **Special Trips Budget:** A dedicated monthly budget for essential excursions that directly support community integration and wellbeing.

Photos:

A recycling workshop taking place in the Kairos Housing Wellbeing Hub around recycling.

A Day Trip to Manchester

Guest quote in full:

“Spending time with you and the Kairos group has been such a deeply positive and meaningful experience for me. I really enjoy coming down — it’s always a warm and friendly atmosphere where everyone feels truly included. Meeting others and sharing our stories has helped me build confidence and feel more connected to the community.

As you know, I come from a background as a former military officer, poet, writer, and social activist. Being away from my homeland has, at times, felt like living through the flames of hell. But the Kairos group has given me the sense of a real family — guiding me towards new paths in life and helping me regain hope and purpose.

I honestly don’t have words strong enough to express my gratitude. Even the word “thanks” feels too small compared to what I truly feel for all the kindness, support, and inspiration you and the group have given me.

Last week in Manchester was also wonderful — both joyful and inspiring. I’m deeply thankful for every moment shared with you and everyone at Kairos.

Many, many thanks. “