

# Looking back on 2020

## Mark Simms CEO of P3

I have always felt that P3 people are a driven bunch, living and breathing a strong set of values, and going above and beyond to develop authentic relationships of support with the people we are here to serve. But in my seven years as CEO, I never thought that my conviction would be put to the ultimate test. And not just once, but twice in three years. How could any scenario planning or risk register ever test our resolve as effectively as the combination of the Grenfell Tower tragedy and a global pandemic have done? As I write this, both events continue to challenge and occupy us, and our work is far from being over. However, an invitation from SASC to contribute to their 2020 Impact Report has given me the opportunity to step back and offer a perspective on P3 and its journey over the last five years.

In 2015, P3 was delivering one outreach service in the West Midlands. That work taught us the importance of learning from the people we're here for, hiring good people to fulfil our mission and not following the crowd! We learned that the success of our services relies on our staff having the energy, talent and drive to listen to and support our clients in a very intentional way, each and every day of their work. From there we embarked on a growth path to work with socially excluded and vulnerable people in new areas. We wanted to meet the increasing demand for our services while staying true to our mission to make a real and lasting difference to individuals within their communities. We are proud to have teams now operating in Derbyshire, Cambridgeshire, Staffordshire, Lincolnshire, Wolverhampton, Gloucestershire, and Warwickshire. In all these places, we help people experiencing homelessness to get off the streets and we work alongside people to prevent them losing their homes.

Early on in our growth journey, we realised it was important to make sure that P3's systems and infrastructure could cope, without diluting our ethos. We are fortunate to have in our Board a group of Trustees and a governance structure that have made this possible. Despite the inevitable pressures on finance that characterise this sector, we have been able to achieve a level of growth that is both manageable and impactful. That has meant we have been able to support communities when and where it is most needed. In 2017, we mobilised our services to help respond to the need which arose out of the Grenfell Tower tragedy. We continue to serve the children and young people in that community through our work with the Rugby Portobello Trust. More recently as the impact of the pandemic became clear, we were able to increase our capacity during the government's 'Everyone In' campaign to support nearly 1,000 additional people to exit the streets and access safe, temporary accommodation during the early stages of lockdown.

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Around 2018, we began to realise that in areas where we were offering housing-related support and street outreach, there were significant issues around the availability of quality, secure housing. In the absence of a decent and stable house, our services could only go so far in addressing the needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged people. That was when we met the SASC team. What SASC could provide addressed our frustrations around access to good housing. SASC loans have enabled us to take charge of our own housing needs. P3 has been able to co-create with SASC viable housing solutions that are delivering affordable, quality and secure housing for the people we are serving. This will lead to improved outcomes and better lives for the people who make them their homes and allow them to integrate into their communities.

Taking control of our own housing needs has provided the springboard for planning our next

phase. We are already developing new housing and support solutions to meet people's accommodation needs for the next phase of response to the pandemic: 'Everyone In For Good'. This is a bold plan: to significantly increase the P3 housing portfolio over the coming twelve months and provide people experiencing homelessness and social inequality with access to sustainable, quality housing.

I believe that P3's biggest achievement over recent years has been our ability to flex resources and mobilise to support communities when and where it is most needed. The fact that P3 is needed in so many places in this country is a genuine tragedy and we wish the societal problems we're tackling didn't exist at all. Until that wish is granted, we will be here, doing our level best to change as many lives as possible, for the better, every day.

**Mark Simms,**  
CEO of P3. For more  
information about P3,  
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