



Spring 2025

Newsletter



Church
Homeless
Charity

The logo for Church Homeless Charity features four colored squares in a 2x2 grid: purple (top-left), pink (top-right), orange (bottom-left), and green (bottom-right). To the right of the squares, the organization's name is written in a purple, sans-serif font across three lines.



Welcome

Since our last newsletter, we've received wonderful feedback which we'd like to share – proving the real and tangible difference that donations make for people experiencing homelessness.

Alongside our tailored grants for individuals, we fund group activities within supported housing schemes. These activities help to build confidence, healthy routines, and more hope for the future. For those with poor mental health or struggling with addiction, these activities can be a lifeline.

The festive season saw us funding Christmas dinners in 15 supported housing schemes, ensuring that residents could enjoy a sense of community at what can be a difficult time of year. A scheme staff member at Hardwick House described their celebrations to us:

This was possibly the best Christmas that I have encountered. The customers as well as the staff all joined in with cooking, organising and just being themselves. This period is upsetting to some – especially those that are far away from friends and families. We brought a sense of community and friendship to those customers that would otherwise decline to engage with others outside of their own space.

Read more about Hardwick House on pages 8 and 9.

One scheme in Cambridge used our support to host a cupcake making afternoon, giving residents a fun and creative way to spend time together. They also transformed an empty room into a wellbeing space, creating a welcoming environment where residents can relax and focus on their mental health.

A scheme in Gloucester also recognised the need to bring residents out of their rooms and into shared spaces, and with our funding, they purchased a pool table.



It's brought a great sense of camaraderie. People who wouldn't normally socialise are now spending time together every day.

This is just a small glimpse into how grants change lives – helping to create connections, hope, and joy in places where they're needed most.



Serving those who served: addressing veteran homelessness

This edition of the newsletter is dedicated to raising awareness of homeless veterans and their needs. The debt we owe to our veterans is profound, yet too many find themselves facing homelessness after leaving military service.

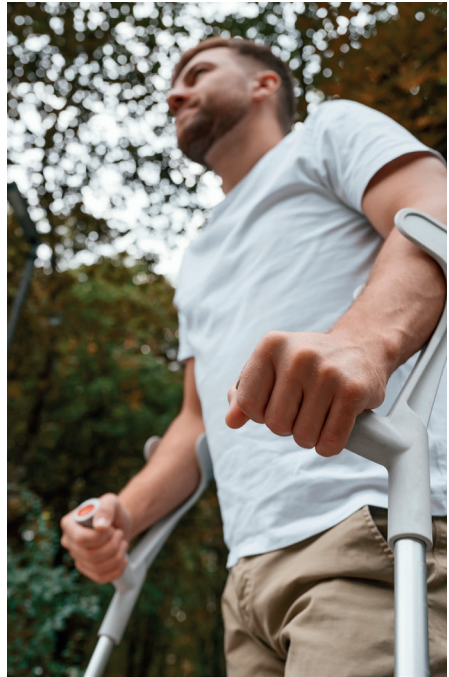


Following military discharge, veterans can experience a unique set of challenges that destabilise their housing situation. These can include:

- **Mental health:** experiences of combat can lead to conditions like PTSD, anxiety, and depression, hindering their ability to cope with everyday life.
- **Relationship challenges:** maintaining or rebuilding close relationships and friendships can be difficult after years of service, leading to isolation.
- **Limited civilian skills:** many veterans struggle with the practicalities of daily life, such as managing bills, securing employment, and navigating benefit systems.
- **Service-related injuries:** lasting physical issues can significantly impact a veteran's ability to reintegrate.

Recent statistics highlight a concerning trend: in 2022/23, **2,110** veteran households were assessed as homeless in England, marking a **14% increase** from the previous year. This figure likely underrepresents the true scale of the issue, as many veterans experience 'hidden homelessness,' relying on temporary accommodation with friends or family.

Despite transition support offered by the Ministry of Defence, and Government funded initiatives such as Operation Fortitude and the Reducing Veteran Homelessness



Programme, a number of veterans feel that the support available is hard to access and does not provide what they really need when they need it.

A holistic approach is crucial, encompassing specialised housing schemes, peer support networks, and access to mental health professionals with military experience.

We are playing a vital role in supporting homeless veterans on their personal journey. Tailored CHC grants meet people where they are. When someone is ready to take the next steps to independence, our grants help with rent arrears, deposits and household items – aiding the transition.

But support starts long before that moment. A gym membership, art supplies, or tools for a cherished hobby can be just as significant – offering a sense of purpose, improving mental health, and building resilience. If it helps a veteran move forward, it matters.



In partnership with veteran services, we can honour the sacrifices of those who served and ensure they have a better chance to thrive in civilian society.

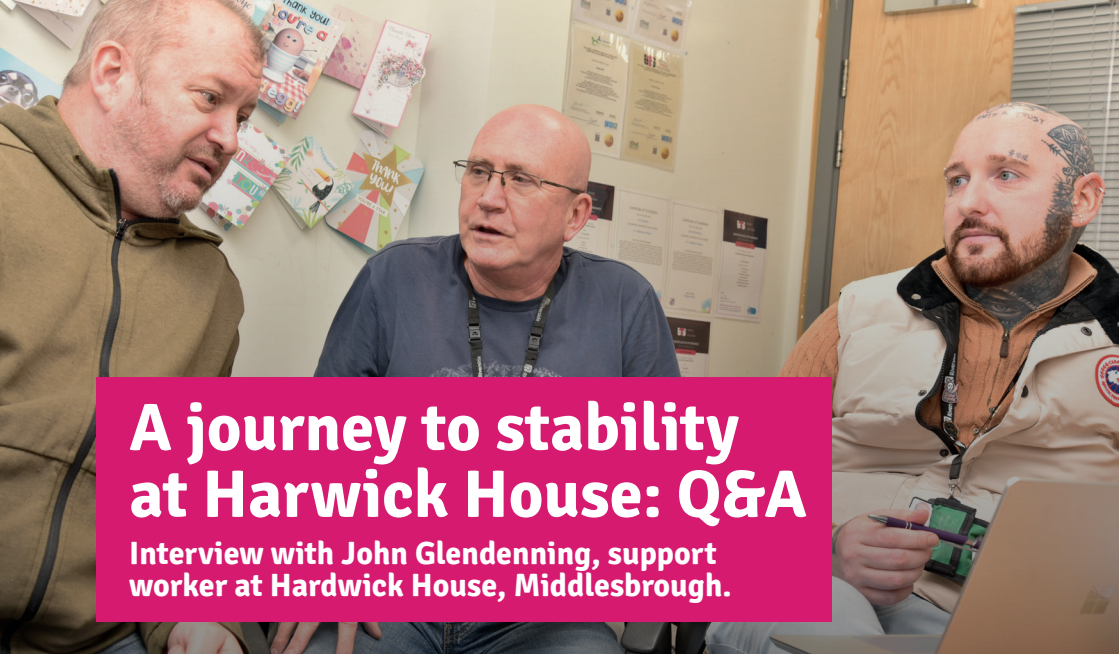




Mark's story

Having faced the challenges of isolation and self-medication, Mark understands the importance of having someone to listen. During his struggles with alcohol after leaving the military, he often called the Samaritans for support - especially in the early hours of the morning. Now, he's giving back by volunteering with Samaritans, taking the night shift at 3 a.m., the time he used to call the most.

To support his role, Mark requested funding for a laptop, allowing him to volunteer remotely. It will also help him on his journey to independent living, enabling him to bid on properties and take the next steps toward a stable future.



A journey to stability at Harwick House: Q&A

Interview with John Glendenning, support worker at Hardwick House, Middlesbrough.

Pictured l-r: Lee Deighton, George Bell, John Glendenning: support staff at Hardwick House.

Can you explain what Harwick House is, and how you support homeless veterans?

Hardwick House is supported accommodation for Homeless Veterans which is commissioned by the local authority - comprising 20 single self-contained flats.

We support homeless veterans with short-term accommodation (up to 18 months) and support all customers to develop the skills they need to live independently and go on into independent housing in their area of choice. Hardwick House has four main pillars of activity which are:

- Independent living skills & development
- Health & wellbeing
- Training & education/ maximising income
- Structured transition into independent housing

What are some of the biggest challenges faced by the veterans you support?

The challenge we face currently is shortage of housing in the Middlesbrough area. The majority of my group want to move on and are actively looking for somewhere to live - either in social housing, or in the private rental sector. A lot of my time is spent helping people find somewhere suitable to live. Because of the way that the benefit system works they cannot work while they are in supported accommodation. So until they can find somewhere independent to live, they are not able to take up job opportunities and their whole life is on hold.

What's the most rewarding part of your role, and what keeps you motivated in this line of work?

The most rewarding part of my role is building relationships with customers and helping them achieve milestones on their progress plans. I have witnessed many customers turn their lives around from being at high risk with incidents daily – to moving on positively from Hardwick House.

Seeing grants approved for vital things – to either build up structure when they have very little income – or for moving on into independent living, has been fantastic.

What do you wish more people understood about the veterans you support/homeless veterans?

I wish more people understood that veterans do have different triggers/support needs compared to general members of the public. It does take a lot of time to build up trust and break down boundaries and build up structure when supporting them. Veterans do struggle adapting to civilian life, and it's important that this is done correctly in a psychologically informed and structured way. I have worked in many supported living schemes, and I've learnt that veterans do require a different approach – more specifically when dealing with triggers/mental health.

What impact has CHC's support had on the veterans at Hardwick House?

We've witnessed customers at the beginning of the support journey completely change and turn their lives around thanks to the

support provided. It gives me great satisfaction seeing my customers' faces light up when grants have been approved, especially when they've been turned down for other sources of funding.

CHC grants help our veterans to build structure in their lives. Structure is the key to addressing most of the issues identified on support plans and risk assessments.

Then, when people are ready to move on from supported accommodation into independent living, CHC grants help to achieve a smooth transition which is vital for a positive outcome.

We can't thank CHC and your donors enough for what you do.



An apartment at Hardwick House



The reception at Hardwick House

Small grants, big impact

Starting over

For someone just coming off the streets, grants may cover basic essentials such as clothing, toiletries, or obtaining photo ID.

Building self esteem

We recognise the importance of hobbies in building a sense of purpose. Our grants can fund art materials, musical instruments, cameras and more, empowering people to reconnect with their passions.



Unlocking potential

As people progress, we can support training, education, or volunteering opportunities - opening doors to new skills and future employment.



Physical and emotional wellbeing

Good health is fundamental to building a stable life. Our grants can help with health-related needs such as dental treatments and foot care. Often people choose to attend a gym or fitness classes for their mental health. And we can also fund 1-2-1 counselling sessions.



The journey from homelessness to independent living is unique for everyone. Our group and individual grants provide support at any stage of that journey, helping people move forward with confidence.

While our individual grants are small – typically up to £200 – the impact is often life-changing. We regularly hear from recipients about the difference even a small grant can make in rebuilding lives.

Reconnecting with loved ones

For many, rebuilding family connections is a crucial step in their journey. We provide grants to help people visit estranged family members, or reconnect with children. For those attending the funeral of a loved one, we can cover clothing and transport costs.



Staying connected

Access to the internet is essential in today's world, yet the cost of a smartphone or ongoing data is beyond the reach of many homeless people. Our grants can provide basic smartphones – or laptops for those pursuing education, training or work.



Moving to independence

The ultimate goal for most of the people we help is to move on from temporary accommodation into a home of their own. Our grants can cover rent deposits, advance rent, utilities and removal costs, making this transition possible.



Creating a home

We can provide grants for carpets, curtains and white goods, as these are often missing from the housing provided. A comfortable and welcoming space creates stability, helping people take their next steps in life.



Sarah's story

Sarah developed mental health issues during her time in the military, including PTSD, anxiety, and depression. Relationships, including the one with her partner, became difficult for her. Following the breakdown of her relationship, Sarah was left with significant debts in her name, including car finance and council tax arrears.

Whilst in supported accommodation, Sarah applied for council housing closer to her family. Sadly, her application was suspended due to previous debts.

Church Homeless Charity covered the arrears, giving Sarah vital support to move forward.



The funding has given me a new start, and the ability to live an independent life.

*Recipient's name changed to preserve their anonymity at their request.

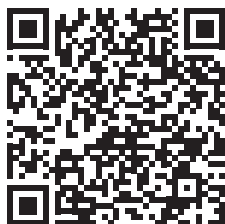


Paul's story

Paul, a veteran, lives with PTSD from his military service, along with physical injuries that left him with muscle weakness in his arms and legs. During a stay in a mental health hospital, he formed a close friendship that became a turning point in his journey. With nowhere to go after his discharge, his friend helped him connect with an accommodation service for veterans. There, Paul immediately felt at ease in the welcoming environment, appreciating the balance of support, structure, and independence.

Regular walks soon improved his mobility and lifted his mood. Wanting to continue his progress, Paul and a few other residents became interested in joining a local gym. A grant from CHC covered his membership, giving him access to gym facilities and a spa - supporting both his physical recovery and mental well-being. This holistic approach, combining physical exercise with relaxation and community support, empowers Paul as he takes his next steps to independent living.

Watch Paul's feedback video:



Once you come home, you think to yourself, I've actually done something - and it sets your mood for the whole day. It has helped me re-evaluate what I want, and what I want to be.



Summer grants in action

Longer days and warmer weather bring opportunities to enjoy the outdoors, but for people in homeless schemes, summer can sometimes feel like a season of missed experiences.

Our grants can make a massive impact in the summer months – helping to provide the simple joys that many of us take for granted. At this time of the year, our grants can be used to fund trips to the seaside, funfairs, national parks or zoos.

Last summer, women at a supported accommodation scheme in Manchester enjoyed a day at the beach, thanks to our funding. It was a cathartic day for all – many had rarely ventured to the coast: one woman shared that she had never seen the sea before.

The trip was a turning point – customers who had never engaged in social activities began to form friendships, confidence grew, and many were inspired to take part in further activities. The success of the trip led to spin-off projects that continued to improve residents' wellbeing long after the day itself.

Similarly, a trip to Southend beach for residents of a scheme in Essex created moments of pure joy. Many had grown up in difficult circumstances where such trips were out of reach. One resident's excitement at riding a rollercoaster for the first time lifted the entire group – an experience they still talk about today.

These excursions help homeless individuals feel normal, included, and part of a community. They provide a chance to escape, to experience something new, and to form bonds that can be life changing.

This summer, could you help us fund more trips like these?

Your support could help someone see the possibilities beyond their current situation and look forward to a brighter future.

Scan the QR code to donate now:



What we do

We are a small yet highly efficient charity, reliant on the generosity of our donors. Every contribution you make allows us to provide timely, tailored grants to individuals in England – around 3,000 every year.

Fundraising

If you would like to fundraise for us, please reach out and we'll support however we can.

To get started, either send us an email: info@churchhomelesscharity.org.uk or set up a Just Giving page by heading to our page and clicking 'Fundraise for us'.

Set up a Just Giving page



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