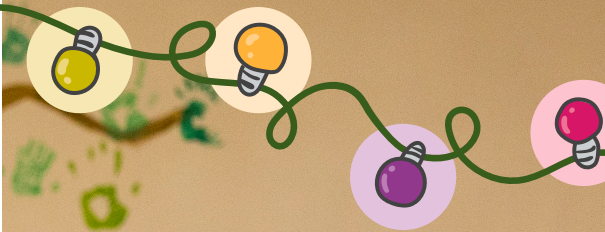




Church
Homeless
Charity



Winter 2024

Newsletter



Photography: Centre for Homelessness Impact / Liam McBurney/PA

Focus on families

No place to call home: the hidden struggles of families in temporary accommodation

The number of families forced into temporary accommodation across England has reached a heartbreaking high, with around 120,000 households, including thousands of children, living in conditions that are far from what any family should endure.

This crisis has many faces, and the path here is complex. Private rental costs have surged by around 8% in the past year alone, making housing increasingly unaffordable for those on low incomes, especially as welfare support decreases in real terms.

With limited tenant rights in England, families face vulnerability to sudden evictions. And a chronic shortage of affordable housing has left countless families on long waiting lists.

Temporary housing, intended as a stopgap in times of crisis, has become an indefinite reality for too many. Local councils determine whether a household qualifies as being in 'priority need.' If they do, the council is legally required to provide 'interim accommodation' while assessing the household's suitability

for longer-term housing. Housing that is in scarce supply.

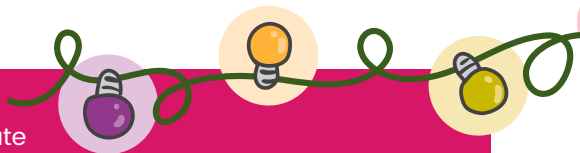
Figures show a devastating 29% rise in families placed in emergency accommodation like B&Bs, hostels and homeless schemes in the last year. These cramped spaces lack basic amenities like private kitchens, making it near impossible for parents to prepare healthy meals or give their children the sense of normality that they crave.

The impact on families extends far beyond the lack of space or privacy. For parents, the constant uncertainty—never knowing how long their situation will last, often being placed far from friends and family—places an immense strain on their well-being. For children, the trauma of this instability can have lifelong effects on their education, mental health, and future.

At Church Homeless Charity, we believe every family has the right to more than just temporary shelter—they need a place to truly call home. Through essentials like household items, school uniforms, and mental well-being support, we work to restore dignity and hope. Yet while these efforts are vital, they're only part of the solution. What's needed is lasting change that makes affordable housing a top priority.



To donate visit
churchhomelesscharity.org.uk/donate



A closer look at the struggles of homeless families this winter

Interview with Suzanne Bailey, Service Manager at Riverside Marie House, Young Families Service in Wakefield.

We spoke with Suzanne to gain insight into the challenges homeless families face and the kinds of support that make a real difference during the winter months.

What support do homeless families need most?

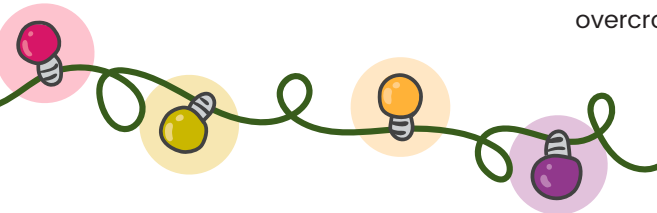
Homeless families often need comprehensive support to find suitable, long-term housing. Then once they move in, they need help with furnishings as most of the places available are unfurnished, with no carpets or curtains. Beyond accommodation, they benefit from help with budgeting and managing debt. Many also need guidance on engaging with their communities and finding job or training opportunities. And education on healthy relationships and staying safe is essential for building resilience and independence.

What are the biggest challenges faced by homeless families?

Finances are a massive concern, especially with the cost of living. Budgeting and managing basic expenses can be overwhelming for many people. There is never enough money coming in to make ends meet.

Why are more families experiencing homelessness?

Family and relationship breakdowns are leading factors – strained relationships between partners or family members often result in someone having to leave their home. Financial difficulties and debt are also significant, as families facing these issues often end up relying on friends or relatives for accommodation, creating overcrowded living conditions.





Why is winter a more challenging season for homeless families?

Rising fuel prices make it difficult for families to keep their accommodation at a comfortable temperature. Keeping your children warm often takes priority over other essentials, so the need for support is even more urgent.

Fundraising

We'd like to thank everyone who took part in fundraisers during the last few months. Your support is deeply appreciated and helps us to extend our reach to more people in need.

Camping out for the cause

Staff members from The Beacon opted to experience a night outdoors for their recent fundraiser. Setting up camp in their local Tesco car park, they were also joined by a few Tesco staff members. Taking sponsorships, and donations on the night, they raised an incredible £1,159.84.

The Beacon (part of Riverside Group) offers supported housing to single veterans who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and who have support needs.

Cindy McAulay, Projects Assistant at The Beacon said: "We wanted to do the fundraiser for your fabulous charity as we feel that it's time to give back. And we cannot thank you enough for the constant support you give our veterans."



A musical message of hope

For over 35 years, musician Bryn Haworth has taken his music to prisons, where he speaks with inmates and witnesses firsthand the close link between prison and homelessness. Driven by his belief that cycles of homelessness can be broken with better support, affordable housing, and stronger care systems, Bryn is passionate about making a difference. "Having a home goes some way to breaking that cycle," he says. In line with this message, he recently rereleased his single *All I Need is a Home* to raise awareness and funds for Church Homeless Charity. His efforts have been impactful, exceeding his £1,000 fundraising goal.





A day to treasure

3i's summer fundraiser at London Zoo was a roaring success, raising an incredible £5,206. Staff put their teamwork skills to the test with a thrilling treasure hunt, culminating in a grand prize for the team that cracked the final code.

If you know a business that would like to partner with us and elect us as a chosen charity, then please get in touch. By making us your chosen cause, you can make a real difference in the lives of those most in need.

To learn more, please contact us at info@churchhomelesscharity.org.uk.



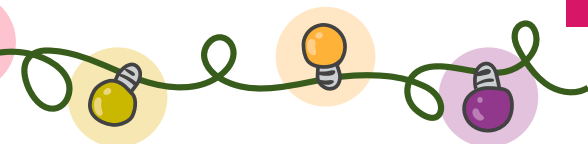
Festive fundraising

As the festive season draws near, we're incredibly grateful for the support of churches and communities who organise events to raise funds for us.

Last year, one of our trustees, Liz Toher, organised a brilliant concert at her church, raising vital funds to support those in need throughout the winter months (Pictured).

Each event hosted by our supporters extends a helping hand to people with very little.

If your church or community group would like to host a fundraising event, please reach out - we'd love to help make it a success.



Real stories, real change

Zahra's story

After escaping an abusive situation with her 13-year-old daughter, Zahra* found herself living in a hotel room provided by social services. With no access to benefits, the financial pressure of covering even basic needs – three meals a day, laundry, and daily essentials – became overwhelming. She had to borrow money just to keep afloat, increasing the strain on her already challenging circumstances.

When Zahra was referred to Church Homeless Charity, she received a grant to help cover immediate essentials. “The grant allowed us to manage our situation a bit better,” Zahra says. She used the funds to pay off some accumulated debt, purchase essential hygiene items, and cover the travel expenses for her daughter and herself as they had to move between temporary accommodation.

The support has made a huge difference,” Zahra shared. “People like you make a real difference in this life.” For Zahra, this grant has not only provided critical financial relief but also a renewed sense of hope and stability during a dark and uncertain time.



Taj's story

When Taj had to leave his mother's home due to overcrowding and a strained relationship with his stepfather, he was suddenly faced with limited housing options. A place in a hostel was found, but the hostel required a move-in fee - an amount simply unaffordable on Taj's young adults Universal Credit payments.

Thanks to a timely grant from Church Homeless Charity, he secured a room, removing a significant hurdle to starting anew. The hostel offers not only a room but also essential support services, creating a positive environment for him to thrive.

Now, Taj is working as a part-time teaching assistant with SEN children, building a future he had not thought possible.



Taj's support worker commented: "Your grants continue to make a positive impact on young adults struggling with homelessness. Each grant has the potential to turn someone's life around."

*Names altered for privacy





Rooted in history, growing in impact

Church Homeless Charity may be small, but with just four dedicated staff, we're making a powerful impact. Each week, we raise funds and distribute grants that change lives—supporting around 3,000 people each year.



Since the COVID lockdown, our team has been working remotely, coming into the office once a week to process donations. We're thrilled to announce that our partners at Riverside have offered us a new space at Queen Mary's Hostel in London. This move will save us £20,000 annually, funds that will now go directly towards helping even more people in need.

Queen Mary's, located near Victoria Station, is a sanctuary for 49 women who would otherwise be homeless. Many have endured trauma and abuse, leading to significant mental health challenges. As one of the first purpose-built hostels by Church Army Housing, Queen Mary's has a rich history, opened by Queen Mary and King George in 1926.

It feels incredibly meaningful to return to our roots, sharing space with some of the very people we support. For over ten years, we have funded Queen Mary's garden project, transforming the courtyard into a green oasis where residents can gather and connect through gardening.

With this new proximity, we hope to strengthen our partnership and contribute even more to the building. Our first goal: transforming the basement into a welcoming area for therapeutic activities and communal gatherings. (Pictured: the garden with residents.)

Who we help, and where

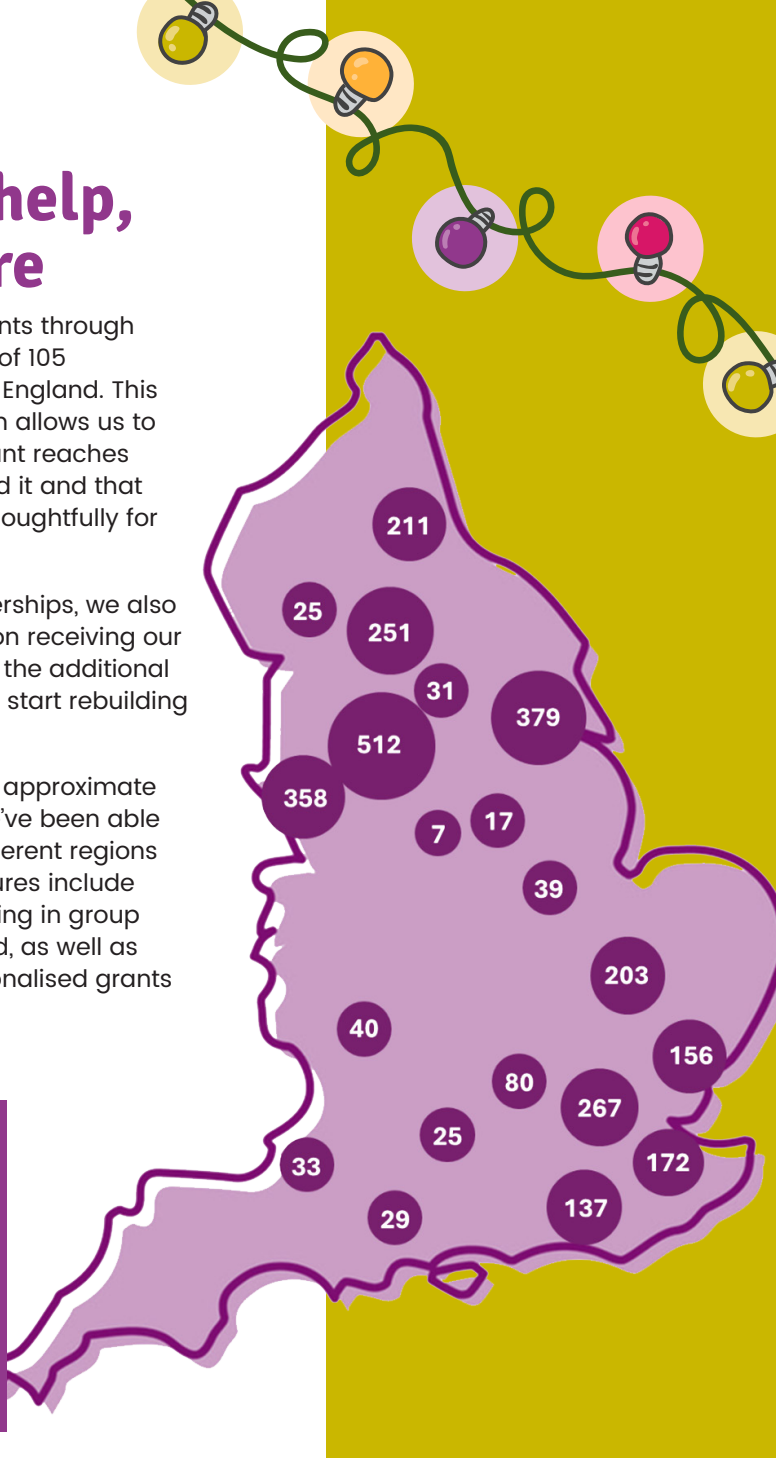
We distribute our grants through a registered network of 105 organisations across England. This partnership approach allows us to ensure that every grant reaches people who truly need it and that the funds are used thoughtfully for essential support.

Through these partnerships, we also know that each person receiving our grants has access to the additional services they need to start rebuilding their lives.

This map reflects the approximate number of people we've been able to support across different regions in England. These figures include individuals participating in group activities that we fund, as well as those receiving personalised grants for vital needs.



Scan to donate





Scan here to get the guide

How to help homeless people guide

This October, for World Homeless Week, we campaigned to raise awareness on how everyone can play a part in supporting homeless individuals. As part of the campaign, we released *How to Help Homeless People*, a comprehensive guide designed to empower people with practical advice, resources, and answers to common questions. We've created two versions—one for individuals and another tailored specifically for churches.

The guide is still available for anyone who missed it and wants to make a difference but might not know where to begin. Our goal this year was to spread positive awareness, bust myths, and most importantly, to help get homeless people the support they need. The guide is filled with useful resources, from how to engage

safely with people on the streets to where to direct them for further help.

We believe that a small action from each of us can add up to a big impact. If you or your church community would like to download the guide, it's not too late.

Scan the QR code or head to:
www.churchhomelesscharity.org.uk/help-homeless-people-guide/

