

Summer Newsletter

August 2024



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Special Stories

The current crisis: homelessness in 2024

It has been an eventful few months in the UK, and the General Election cast a particular spotlight on issues like economic inequality, poverty and the current state of welfare provision for those living on the breadline.

We'd therefore like to use this opportunity to spotlight homelessness, and what the current realities of homelessness in the UK are:

- **Over 300,000 people** are homeless today in England alone, including **over 140,000 children**.
- London is particularly badly effected, with the borough of Newham having a rate of 1 in 20 people effected by homelessness.

These figures include both rough sleepers, those who are in temporary or supported accommodation, and the “hidden homeless” who may be sleeping on friends’ sofas.



- In the final months of 2023, Government figures **showed a 16% jump in homelessness figures**, reflecting the mounting effect of the cost-of-living crisis and the ongoing housing crisis.
- Research done in recent years shows **more than 9 in 10 people who are homeless have suffered trauma** either as a cause or consequence of becoming homeless. Domestic violence is a particularly common cause of homelessness.
- Of those sleeping rough, **more than a third have suffered violence** from members of the public and over half have been intimidated or harassed.

It is clear from this snapshot of homelessness in 2024 that more needs to be done to end homelessness and rough sleeping once and for all. Church Homeless Charity is one of many organisations that can and do provide vital relief, but it is only by uniting in our calls for action that we will see real, permanent change in the year to come.

How are we spending donations?

In 2023-4 we gave
£301,000 in grants to
people who were
homeless



£12,000 on
social
activities

£15,000 on
therapeutic
gardening



£78,000 on digital
inclusion, giving
512 homeless
people six months
of free data



£32,000 on
health and
wellbeing



£102,000 in
resettlement grants
enabling 592
homeless people to
move into a home



£62,000 in personal
grants to 413
homeless people,
for clothing, food,
training, etc...

Over **£300,000** given in grants is a tremendous achievement for a small charity like Church Homeless Charity. It translates into **helping around 3,000 homeless individuals every year**, with everything from resettlement grants to get them back on their feet in their own home, to emergency support with vital essentials like food and clothing, to the sort of therapeutic and social support that helps restore the confidence and well-being of those who may have had a very difficult few years.

All of this is possible because of the support of our donors. As we receive no government or church funding, it is people like yourselves who provide 100% of our funding.

Homelessness and pets

It is hard to underestimate what an important part of the family pets really are. Even when times get hard, the love and loyalty of a pet can make a world of difference to someone who is struggling. That's why Church Homeless Charity do all we can to keep those families together; healthy and happy.

Not all homeless services are able to support pets, and unfortunately that can be a reason that rough sleepers refuse accommodation. Unwilling to leave their beloved pets behind, they'd rather sleep on the street than leave their furry friends to an uncertain fate. That's why Church Homeless Charity are proud to work with several services that allow pets. In the past, we have even paid for essentials like pet food, collars and leashes, and dog beds so both the homeless individual and their pet could settle into their new life. Sometimes, a pet can be the reason for someone to refuse vital rehabilitation treatment, so CHC pay for kennel services while their owner is away.

Last month we paid for Mariah - a dog owned by a homeless resident called Martin at a service in London - to be spayed. Martin had become homeless after his ill health caused him to lose his job, and soon he was unable to pay his rent.

Unwilling to part with his beloved dog, he applied for accommodation at a pet-friendly service - but they could only be accepted if his dog was spayed. Having spent all his savings



Martin and Mariah happily together

trying to get by in the previous months, he had nothing left to pay for the often costly procedure and faced a difficult choice.

Service staff believe it was absolutely essential to Martin's mental health that Mariah remain by his side. Thankfully, Church Homeless Charity was able to step in and pay for the procedure, and now Martin can focus on rebuilding his life rather than worrying about Mariah.

"Today is a great joy for us all to see Martin happy and well, and the same can be said about Mariah."

Everyone experiencing homelessness has a unique story, and many benefit from the tailored support our grants provide. Here are just a few of their stories, and what a big difference your support has made to their lives.



“A massive thank you for clearing my arrears, I have been so emotional over the generosity, it has helped me out so much and hopefully will enable me to find accommodation close to my family a lot sooner.”

Eleanor was made homeless when her relationship broke down. Her ex-partner had left her with a great deal of debt that she simply couldn't tackle. Her mental health collapsed, and she was placed in supported accommodation late last year.

Her debt was keeping her in a vicious cycle; she was unable to move on from emergency accommodation due to arrears, and unable to work due to her accommodation. Church Homeless Charity paid to clear those arrears, and now Eleanor is able to rebuild her life.



One of the most important things for many people who are or have been homeless to access is therapy. Trauma is a common cause of homelessness, and becoming and being homeless is a trauma in of itself.

CHC support counselling and therapy sessions at services across the country, giving homeless individuals a chance to talk through their issues and have a safe space to express their feelings. It's clear that prioritising mental health services is key to helping homeless individuals to rebuild their lives, and that's why this year we supported so many people to access therapy.

“Hailey has helped me feel less isolated and more confident. She's helped me recognise my triggers and disown other people's guilt.”



Like so many people who come to the UK seeking asylum from the dangers they faced in their home countries, getting British residency was a mixed blessing for Bilal, who was immediately evicted from his accommodation.

Although thankful to have secured himself in the UK, Bilal then spent four months rough sleeping, facing entirely new threats in an unfamiliar place. Shockingly, recognised asylum seekers being left homeless has become the norm.

When Bilal was finally able to secure a place to stay through a support service, he was moved into a flat with no cooking equipment, bedding, or even a towel. CHC funded these items.

“I'm really thankful for all the help you've given me.”

Reasons to be cheerful

Although these are difficult times, there are still so many reasons to be cheerful. This summer, we've seen music getting people back into a rhythm, some amazing fundraising, and some blooming gardens.



Jo jingles musical therapy

Mums at a service in Suffolk had a chance to spend some time having fun with the little ones thanks to the help of Jo Jingles musical therapy sessions.

This service provides specialised accommodation to young families who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Many of the mums here are on their own and in need of support. Musical therapy gives these families a real opportunity to express themselves that they may otherwise not have had, and Church Homeless Charity are proud to have supported these sessions with an ongoing grant.

"We have danced, sung, laughed, squealed, smiled and so much more. It has been a wonderful experience, and we cannot thank you enough."



Riverside staff supporting CHC

CHC are proud to have the support - once again - of our friends at Riverside. The Riverside Group supports many of our beneficiaries in supported accommodation, and therefore has seen how important CHC grants can be to rebuilding lives.

Every year since 2020, Riverside staff have taken part in a yearly month long fundraiser called 'Stretch for CHC', in which they challenge themselves to complete a fitness goal or exercise challenge with the aim of raising money for our charity.

CHC provide hundreds of grants to Riverside service users each year, so staff there get to see firsthand the difference that CHC grants have made to the people they work with. Over the years they have raised thousands of pounds for our charity. Thank you!



The garden at Queen Mary

Queen Mary's is a facility that supports women who have been homeless and are suffering with mental health issues. CHC have supported an ongoing therapeutic gardening project there for eight years.

In the last few months, eighteen residents have attended the group. They've been able to build relationships, establish friendships, and of course develop new skills out in the garden. Regular attendees have enjoyed taking on responsibilities, and we've seen how beneficial that has been for their self esteem and confidence. It has also allowed staff to get to know the residents better and build trust.

"It was really nice to be here gardening. It's nice to meet with others gardening and interact with them."

How else can you help?

By being one of our supporters, you're already helping us to support around 3,000 homeless individuals every single year. However, we've seen time and time again just how generous and committed you are and know that many of you want to take that extra step. So how else can you support CHC this summer?

Get Sponsored

Whether you're taking part in a fun run, climbing a mountain or just wearing your pyjamas to work - you can get sponsored by your friends and family and pledge the money to a great cause. We've seen some innovative ideas over recent years, so why not share yours with the world this summer? We recommend using platforms like JustGiving, Facebook or even an old fashioned sign-up sheet. For more ideas, check out our website.

You can find examples of previous fundraisers at: churchhomelesscharity.org.uk/fundraise/



Bake Sale

Fancy yourself the next Mary Berry? You can bake and sell your cakes at a church fête, in the office, a street stall, or even to your friends and family. They'll taste all the better knowing every penny goes to someone in need. A popular option in the summer is to host a party or BBQ, encourage everyone to bring a dish, and ask everyone to give a small donation. Not only do you get to support homeless individuals, you also get lots of delicious things to eat!

Sleep Outs

Sleep outs, where you get together with others and spend the night sleeping outdoors, are a great way not only to raise money from sponsors - but also to raise vital awareness in the community. Too often, people become blind to rough sleepers, and by shining a light on the problem you can change perceptions.

There are many more options for fundraising and we know our best ideas come from our supporters - so please get in touch for any support you need with events this summer!

WORLD HOMELESS WEEK

6-13 October 2024

Every year, Church Homeless Charity commemorates World Homeless Week. In this week, we ask all of our supporters to remember the thousands of people that are sleeping rough, living in temporary accommodation, or living with the threat of homelessness. We share case studies and information on social media, and encourage sponsored events and donations. It is a vital part of our fundraising and we'd love for you to be part of it.

We particularly encourage groups and churches to get involved. Each year we provide a World Homeless Week pack with resources including activities, Q&As on why people become homeless, and advice on how to help homeless people in your area. To register your interest, please visit our website at: churchhomelesscharity.org.uk/churches



Patrons The Rt Revd Dr David Walker; Susie Briscoe; David P G Cade; W Ian Hay Davison CBE; William Guthrie; David Robinson; Rt Revd Michael Turnbull CBE; The Ven. David Woodhouse

Trustees Elizabeth Wilson (Chair); Ven Simon Baker; Christopher Daws; Andrew Deutsch; John Glenton; Trevor Morris; Sally Nicholson; Elizabeth Toher

Donate on our website or use the form below

Please accept my/our donation of: £250 £100 £50 £25 £15 Other £ _____

I enclose a cheque / postal order / charity voucher payable to **Church Homeless Charity**

or charge my Visa / Mastercard / CharityCard / Maestro

Name _____ Card number

Address _____ Expiry date Issue no. (Maestro only)

Postcode _____ We need your postcode to process card donations



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REGULATOR**

We'd like to send you information about our work up to three times a year.

If you would prefer not to receive this tick here

If you would prefer updates by email, please provide your email:

giftaid it

Gift Aid. I want to Gift Aid my donation today, and any future donations I make to Church Homeless Charity.

I confirm that I am a UK taxpayer. I understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax in the current tax year than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations it is my responsibility to pay any difference. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify. I understand the charity will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I give.

Signed _____ Date _____

Please return your completed form to: Church Homeless Charity, Canopi, 7-14 Great Dover St, London SE1 4YR

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