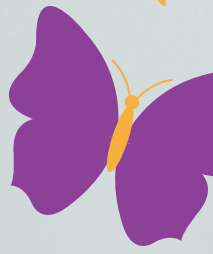


Summer 2025

Newsletter



Church
Homeless
Charity



King George's garden; before and after



What can I say about this place? It's saved my life to be honest. It gave me hope when I was lost. It gave me some purpose in the day. I'm blessed by this place. Jamie

Welcome

You'll notice that we're using this edition to shine a spotlight on the young people we support with our grants – a group often overlooked in conversations about homelessness, yet facing some of the most complex challenges. All the young people we spoke to in preparation for this issue want our supporters to know how incredibly thankful they are. You can read their stories and find out how your donations help them from page 4.

Since the last issue, we've seen more evidence of our impact through feedback from our partner schemes – homelessness schemes across England that work hard to create safe, inclusive, and positive environments. Many of the people they support are facing uncertain futures and struggling to stay hopeful.

That's why, alongside our individual grants, we also fund group activities that help residents connect, build confidence, and feel part of a community.

At King George's Hostel in central London, residents had no outdoor space to enjoy. The team spotted the potential in a narrow side alley, and with a CHC grant, and a lot of hard work from residents, it was transformed into a peaceful, therapeutic garden.



Now fondly known as 'The Secret Garden', it was officially opened by the Lord Mayor of Westminster – a proud moment for all involved.



It was a surreal experience, I felt like royalty myself! The camaraderie and love shone through. I'll never forget it. Paul

In North Yorkshire, staff and residents from The Beacon and Hardwick House were invited to Buckingham Palace by the Not Forgotten Association, which honours veterans living with injury, illness or isolation. With support from a CHC grant, they were able to travel to London and attend the special event.



And at St Ambrose Court in Hull, which supports people with learning difficulties and complex needs, a CHC grant funded a visit from a husky therapy service. The dogs, Autumn and Thunder, brought comfort, calm and joy to residents.



Therapy huskies



Lola

A generation at risk: youth homelessness on the rise

Youth homelessness is reaching critical levels across the country. The rising number of young people without a stable home reflects a societal crisis – one that deepens the disadvantage many already face. This growing trend risks creating lasting barriers for a generation already facing unprecedented challenges.

How are young people becoming homeless?

Family breakdown and abuse

A significant number of young people experiencing homelessness (around 80%) cite family conflict or breakdown as the primary reason for leaving home. This can involve issues like divorce, abuse, neglect, or domestic violence.

Financial hardship and soaring living costs

With 4.5 million children living in poverty, many young people experience hardship before they leave home. Financial stress can

put strain on family relationships, and issues like overcrowding and stretched budgets can push young people out before they're ready. Struggling families are unable to offer practical support – such as help with rent deposits – leaving young people at risk of becoming homeless.

In addition, systemic issues – such as the lower rate of housing benefit, Universal Credit, and wages for under 25s unfairly penalise young people at a time when they need the most help.

Lack of mental health care and support services

Mental health conditions can make it much harder for a young person to cope with everyday challenges. With fewer support services available, many young people struggle to access the help they need to stay in education, maintain relationships, and feel connected to those around them.

Care leavers and vulnerable groups

Young people leaving the care system often lack the support and resources needed to transition into independent living, making them more susceptible to homelessness. Read more about leaving the care system on page 14.

Lack of affordable housing

The shortage of social housing is a national issue, but it places an even greater strain on young people trying to find a stable start. With lower incomes, social housing is often their only realistic option, especially as private sector rents continue to rise. With the average rent in England now £1,394, young people are often forced into HMOs (Houses in Multiple Occupation) i.e. shared houses. These can be completely unsuitable - particularly for those with poor mental health or specific support needs.



Edward



George

We stand with young people

A significant number of the 3,000 people we support each year are under 25 - young people at risk of slipping into a cycle of homelessness that can be incredibly hard to break. What they need is systemic change: better access to housing, stronger social safety nets, and more support for mental health and employment. While we can't fix the system alone, our timely, tailored grants provide a vital boost - helping young people take a step towards the future they want.



From uncertainty to independence

The role of support in young lives.

Interview with Kathryn Mahon, Specialist Support Worker at Powerhouse Foyer, Liverpool – a temporary, supported accommodation service for young people aged 16 to 21.

What effect does homelessness have on young people?

Homelessness can have a serious impact on a young person's mental well-being. It can worsen existing conditions such as anxiety, depression, or eating disorders. Some may turn to criminal activity to get a place to stay or a sofa to sleep on. Others may be exposed to substance misuse or abuse. And it can leave young people feeling incredibly lonely if they've lost contact with family and friends.

What barriers do young people face when trying to move on from homelessness?

Young people will face barriers and discrimination when homeless, as many jobs demand a permanent home address before they'll hire someone, which can make it almost impossible for them to break the cycle of homelessness. If they live in supported accommodation and are successful in seeking employment, they may not be able to afford the high rents and service charges associated with living there. And they may need to save for a deposit for accommodation, but their low income means they are unable to do so.

What do you wish people understood about homelessness amongst young people?

Sometimes society will stereotype homeless people as criminals or drug and alcohol abusers and won't give them a chance. I wish more people understood and were more empathetic with them, as the reasons for homelessness could be due to a lot of different issues they have suffered and are escaping from. For example, parent conflict, loss of a parent, divorce – or financial, mental and physical abuse from family or friends.



What difference does the support of CHC make for young people at the foyer?

We have received funding for excursions from CHC, which staff and residents have been so grateful for. This has benefited the residents in different ways – being out in the sunshine brings a sense of calm and encourages activity and exercise. The social aspect allows the young kids to socialise with other residents of their age and relax and enjoy being out in new places, which can help with their confidence.

A day out with the support from staff can make a positive impact on our residents who struggle daily with their emotions or well-being. Many of our clients have received funding for clothes and shoes, etc, as they may have left their clothes and belongings behind when leaving or fleeing an abusive home or living on the streets.

The new clothes have made them feel better in mood and more confident in appearance, which helps towards their self-esteem. Also, many have received funding for resettlement, which has helped fund household items for the new accommodation. Again, this relieves a lot of worry and financial stress, which helps with their well-being and focus on other issues.



Toby's story

Toby was just 17 when conflict with family members forced him to leave home. Since then, he has lived in several hostels as well as with a partner, with whom he has a child.

Now back in supported accommodation, Toby is eager to start work in car electronics and move into a place of his own.

However, ongoing gut issues made it difficult for him to hold down a job and caused him significant pain and discomfort. After hospital tests came back inconclusive, a key worker suggested a food intolerance test.

Church Homeless Charity funded the test, which identified several intolerances. Toby adjusted his diet accordingly. "I'm basically fixed," he said. "Things are drastically different."

Now, Toby can begin looking to the future with renewed hope.



Your support has sorted out my situation a lot.



What regular giving means to us

Setting up a regular payment to a small charity makes a huge difference. It gives us a steady, reliable income we can count on – vital at a time when, like all charities, we’re facing rising costs as well as increased demand for our help. With that predictable support, we can plan ahead with confidence, increase the number of grants we give, and extend our reach to support more people and more schemes.

‘In a south London suburb, it is disturbing to see people forced by life’s circumstances to beg in the street or to sleep rough in the churchyard, even in the worst of weather. We are advised not to give money – and supplying a sandwich or a drink, although showing compassion, seems like a random act. I therefore prefer to donate regularly to Church Homeless Charity, where I know funds will be specifically targeted to provide maximum benefit to those requiring it most. I can only recommend this method of showing love to a needy neighbour.’

Stuart Forbes – Regular donor

Setting up a regular payment



By post

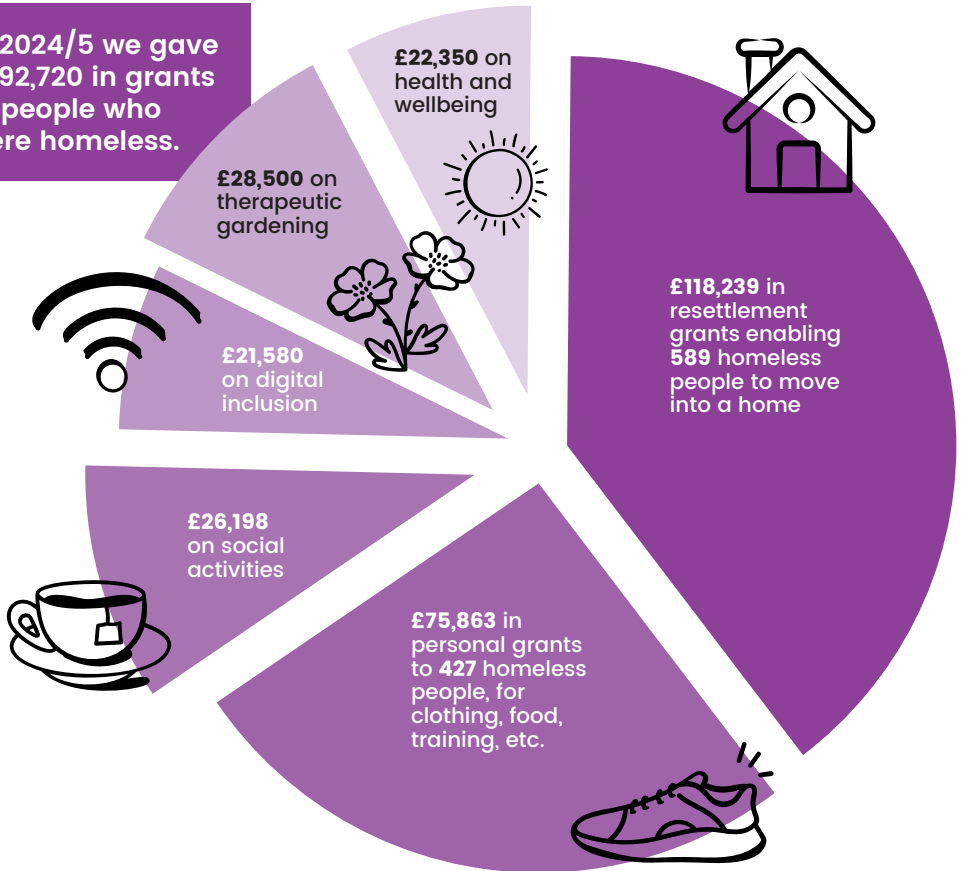
Use the standing order request form enclosed with this newsletter. Simply fill it out and return it to us using the freepost envelope provided.

Online

Scan the QR code to access our online donation form. Choose the monthly donation option instead of a one-off payment.

How are we spending donations?

In 2024/5 we gave £292,720 in grants to people who were homeless.



We're proud to share that, over the past year, we have given almost £300,000 in grants to people experiencing homelessness. For a small charity, that's a remarkable achievement, and it's only possible because of your support.

These grants have helped people in countless ways. From resettlement costs that make

moving into a new home possible, to emergency essentials like food, clothing and toiletries – right through to the therapeutic and social support that restores confidence and wellbeing after years of trauma or instability.

Because we receive no government or church funding, we rely on donations to continue this life-changing work.

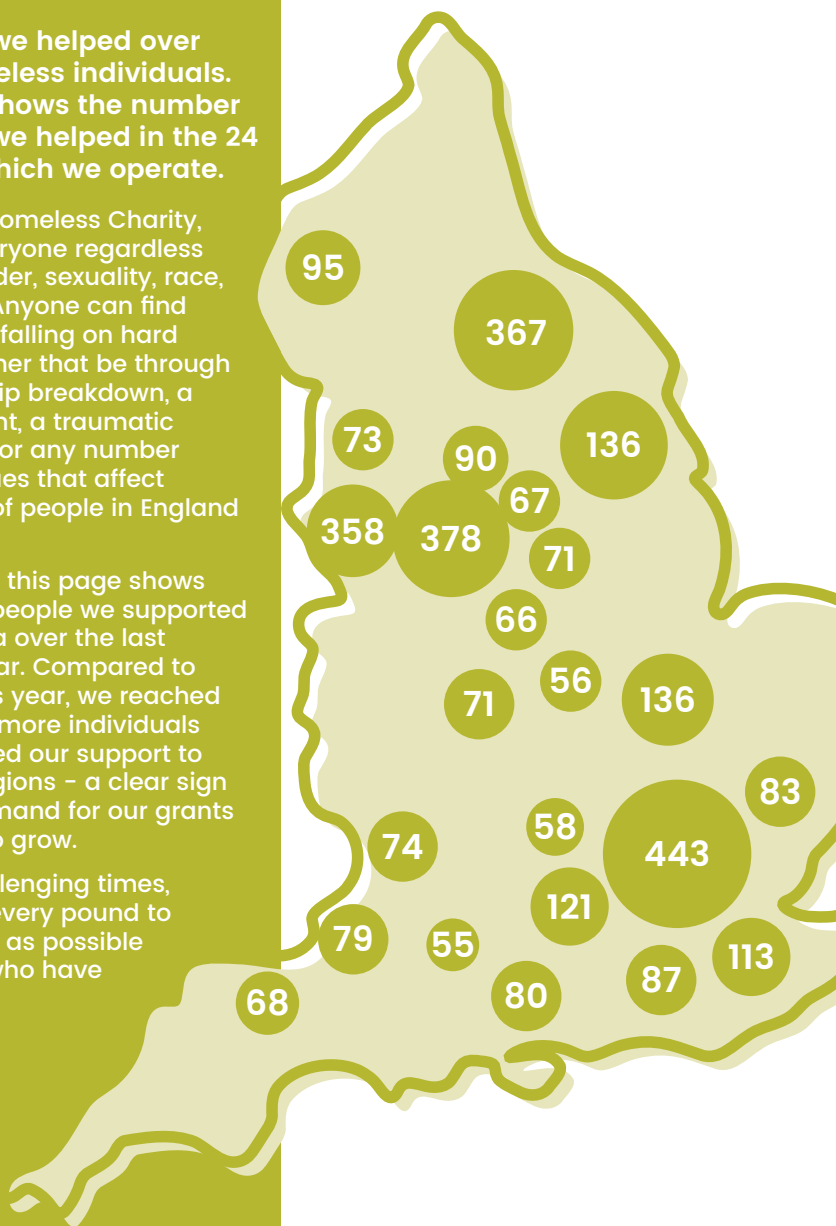
Where do our grants go?

In 2024/5 we helped over 3,200 homeless individuals. The map shows the number of people we helped in the 24 areas in which we operate.

At Church Homeless Charity, we help everyone regardless of their gender, sexuality, race, or religion. Anyone can find themselves falling on hard times, whether that be through a relationship breakdown, a bereavement, a traumatic experience, or any number of other issues that affect thousands of people in England every day.

The map on this page shows how many people we supported in each area over the last financial year. Compared to the previous year, we reached almost 200 more individuals and extended our support to four new regions - a clear sign that the demand for our grants continues to grow.

Even in challenging times, we stretch every pound to do as much as possible for people who have very little.





Homelessness and education: a steep climb

The impact of instability

For young people experiencing homelessness, whether sofa surfing, living in supported accommodation, or in other unstable housing, education often becomes an immense challenge. A lack of funds for essential resources, frequent moves disrupting school attendance, and the emotional toll of family issues like bereavement or conflict can affect their ability to attend school regularly and focus on studies. These pressures can easily eat away at ambitions and hinder progress through to higher education.

Beyond exams: new hurdles

Even for those who defy the odds and achieve good exam results, the prospect of college or university can bring new anxieties. The financial burden of relocating, setting up a new home, and integrating into student life can be a huge obstacle.

Bridging the gap

Recognising these barriers, we help to provide crucial support. Grants for essentials like laptops, books, travelcards, clothes and household items aim to level the playing field. By providing these resources, young people experiencing homelessness can continue their education with fewer hurdles in place.

Orisa's story

Orisa was just 17 when she was forced out of her home for getting pregnant. She was put into foster care at 34 weeks pregnant. When her statutory provision ended when she turned 18, she was moved into supported housing accommodation.

Alone, with a newborn, Orisa committed to studying at college and providing a better life for her and her child. Her support worker described her as 'passionate about beginning her career' and 'desperate to be successful'.

After enrolling, she discovered that a laptop would be essential in order to complete assignments and homework. A grant from Church Homeless Charity funded the laptop, ensuring that Orisa could stay on top of her work.

She later used the laptop for interview training, and then successfully applied for a housing apprenticeship with the council.

"This grant has literally changed the trajectory of Orisa's life", said her support worker.

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



I'm extremely appreciative of what this fund has done for me.

Thrown into adulthood: care leavers and homelessness

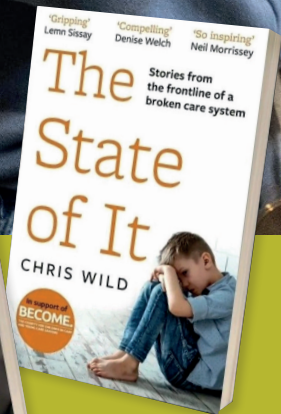
An interview with Chris Wild.

Every year, around 13,000 people 'age out' of the care system in England on their 18th birthday. This is when a care order ends, and the local authority is no longer the 'corporate parent'.

For too many, the support system they need to live independently simply isn't there. Care leavers are left dangerously vulnerable to homelessness, exploitation, and isolation.

In this interview, Chris Wild candidly shares his experience as a care leaver. Chris is a prominent advocate for young people in the UK care system and an author of two books on the subject.

The number of care leavers aged 18 to 20 experiencing homelessness has increased by 54% over the past five years.



Can you tell us a bit about your background and how you came to be in the care system?

My father passed away when I was 11. My mum was young and found solace in alcohol and was mentally unwell. I found solace on the streets with other fragmented boys like me, and I became known to the local authorities as a juvenile delinquent – it became apparent that there was a safeguarding issue at home, and I was taken into a children's home.

What was your experience of leaving care like, and what kind of support - if any - was offered to you at that time?

Absolutely none. It was a handshake, a meeting with a careers officer and a bedsit.

In your view, what are the biggest challenges that care leavers face that others their age often don't?

There's enough evidence to show that the majority of care leavers face daily discrimination with housing, employment and other challenges. A third will experience homeless within two years of leaving care – compare that to their peers and see the dramatic difference.

Care leavers make up 25% of the adult homeless population.

How did these challenges affect your ability to continue education, find a job or secure stable housing?

I had to fight to survive. Literally. I joined the army for food and a roof over my head, but it led to years of mental health struggles and addiction problems. I've been homeless twice in my life because I did not receive any support as a young boy leaving the system.

What do you think needs to change in the care system to better prepare young people for adult life?

Legislation needs to change. We need care experience to be a protected characteristic. This will change the narrative once and for all and put legal protection in place.

Charities like ours support care leavers through small but vital grants - whether for a travel pass, course equipment, or items for a new home. What kind of difference can this kind of help make to someone who is in your position?

Life saving. It's always the trivial things the general public take for granted, but in our world (care experience) it's huge.



Richard, Liz and Gemma - staff at Shaw Street, Everton

Left behind: the young people trapped in homelessness

When we visited three youth schemes recently, we weren't prepared for how trapped the young people there felt. Many were just 18 or 19, an age when life should feel full of choices. But for them, life feels stagnant and restrictive. They told us how hard it is to plan ahead when the system seems designed to hold you back. And about the barriers they face without the kind of support many others take for granted.

Most of the young people in the schemes receive Universal Credit, the social security payment for low-income or out of work people under pension age. **The UC 'standard allowance' is £400 a month – this reduces to just £317 a month for under 25s.** While rent is typically covered by housing benefit, service charges (around £10-£35 per week), food, clothing, travel, phone credit, etc., are the responsibility



A resident at Shaw Street taking part in funded fight training.

of the individual. There is little, if anything, left over to build savings.

If a resident earns enough that housing benefit stops – often after just 16 hours of minimum-wage work – they can become liable for full rent, which can be £200-£300 per week due to on-site support costs. Simply unaffordable on low-wage income.

The reality is that many young people in hostels face a harsh choice: work and risk losing their housing, or stay on benefits and remain stuck. That's the trap.

Every young person deserves the chance to build a future. Our grants give them the tools to do that.

Your support helps us open doors for homeless young people. You become part of their story – and their future.

Esme's story

After the relationship broke down with her mum, Esme stayed with relatives before sofa surfing and staying with her boyfriend's grandma. Eventually, she secured a flat in temporary supported accommodation.

Esme hoped to put down roots after so much uncertainty. For her, this meant creating a homely and welcoming environment.

A grant from Church Homeless Charity helped Esme turn her flat into a place to be proud of. With her newfound confidence, she has started a beauty course at college and found a part-time job.

Her support worker commented: 'She keeps her flat beautifully - it is the homeliest flat I have seen!' Adding: 'She is a prime example that having a safe and secure home enables young people to thrive.'



I couldn't believe that I could buy the things I needed.

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



Feedback from the frontline

Support workers in homelessness schemes play a vital role in identifying where our small grants can make a meaningful difference. Through the relationships they build, they come to understand what matters most to each person – what motivates them, what makes them feel seen and valued, and what could truly help at this stage in their journey.

Often, young people know where they want to be in life, but not how to get there. That's where support workers step in: guiding them, encouraging them, and helping them apply for something practical that could open a door or build confidence.



"I came to The Powerhouse at 16 as a looked-after child, with nothing to take into adult life – no ID, no driving licence, nothing to help me move forward. That's why Church Homeless Charity funding is so important – it's small things that really make a difference. The young people will always remember that someone believed in them enough to give them that start."

*Lloyd Medland
Support Worker at The
Powerhouse Liverpool*

"We support our young people to feel a sense of belonging – something many have been missing since childhood. We take them on trips, help them feel like human beings, help them feel normal. CHC's support has made a huge difference. We've seen young people who weren't engaging suddenly take an interest in the activities you've funded. Your support helps bring smiles back to their faces."

*Chiona Kema
Project Assistant at
Powerhouse Foyer, Liverpool*





“We love the funding from Church Homeless Charity – it makes such a difference. Getting photo IDs for young people is such an important step. For many of the women we support, self-worth is at rock bottom. It’s heartbreaking. But something as simple as seeing their own face on an ID – it gives them the confidence to do everyday things.

CHC also helps fund our social inclusion activities, which are vital. We used funding for a barber visit recently, and it was amazing to see the guys coming out feeling confident and even engaging with others outside their usual groups.

There’s so much anxiety and poor mental health here, and building a sense of community is tough. But with support like this, we’re helping them to start believing in themselves.”

*Regina Sweeney
Support Worker at
Cambridge Youth Foyer*

“When we receive funding, it makes a huge difference – and you can see it in their faces. I remember one young lad who received funding for clothes and shoes. When we applied, he told us he only had the clothes on his back. Some young people arrive here with just a carrier bag of belongings.

So when they get the chance to choose something fashionable, something that helps them fit in with other young people, it means everything. It gives them confidence, and a bit of pride.”

*Elisabeth (Liz) Swindells
Shaw Street, Everton*



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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