

Winter Newsletter

December 2023



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What's Inside...



Our name change!



The Journey Home



Events and Activities

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You may have noticed something different...

The observant among you may have noticed our change of name from Church Homeless Trust to Church Homeless Charity.

The reason for this subtle but important change is that for many the word Trust implies that an organisation has an income from an endowment or a parent organisation; Church Homeless Charity does not. In fact, we are independent and have no guaranteed income. Instead, we are completely reliant on donations from our supporters.

We hope that this change of name will make it easier for us to raise funds to help people who are homeless. It is part of our commitment to continue the work begun 140 years by the Rev Wilson Carlile, who helped people who were sleeping rough on the Thames Embankment.



Church Army Hostel for women in Westminster



At first, Carlile paid for lodgings for those he helped. Eventually, he set up his own dormitory-style hostels for homeless men and women. He recognised that they needed support, and in particular regular paid work to get them off the streets and break the cycle of poverty.

Carlile formalised his work by setting up Church Army Housing in 1924, and in the period between the two world wars Church Army Housing became the main provider of services for people who were homeless across England. There were many men returning from the war with no homes to go to, and at one point the Church Army was housing around 300,000 people, including in large tents in public gardens along the Embankment.

Although we live in very different times, there are sadly still far too many people without homes who need our help. Through updating our name, we hope that we will be able to address any confusion about who we are, raise more funds and continue this vital work.

There are many ways that homeless individuals are kept trapped in the cycle of poverty. One of those is our benefits system, which can often be counterproductive.

For many homeless individuals one of the vital steps to rebuilding their lives is to get a job. However homeless people living in supported accommodation are prevented from working by the benefits system.

If they do get work, under Universal Credit rules the amount they are expected to contribute towards their housing costs can increase from £20 a week to more than £200 a week. This is simply unaffordable for most on the sort of wages they are able to earn.

Sometimes, the local Job Centre will insist that an individual takes a job regardless of the cost, and they quickly get into rent arrears. These rent arrears will be impossible to pay off on a low wage; which will often prevent them from accessing social housing, and which may even lead to them becoming homeless again.

Moving into a home is always costly. Almost all landlords require rent payments in advance, and private landlords will also require a deposit.

Not being able to work and save for a deposit means that homeless people spend more time in supported accommodation than they need to.

This situation puts those affected into an impossible and immensely stressful situation, where they cannot afford to work, and they cannot afford not to either. Often they have other issues to deal with as well, and lack both resources and support networks.

The resettlement grants Church Homeless Charity give to homeless individuals can enable people - who otherwise may be stuck indefinitely in the cycle of poverty - to finally move into a home of their own, by shouldering the burden of that advance rent payment.

This intervention can and has helped to rebuild lives, and it is thanks to the generosity of our donors that hundreds of people across England are now in homes of their own.

It is important however that the benefits system is reformed, so that this trap does not continue to leave countless people in poverty for years to come. These systems should exist to lift people out of poverty, not hold them down. Our hope is that no one be left in this terrible position again. For now, we will keep supporting them.

The Journey Home...

The journey from sleeping rough to finding a home is often long and difficult. Each person who is experiencing homelessness has individual needs, abilities, and dreams. We fund the specific support that helps them to rebuild their lives and establish a home.

Getting off the streets

Sleeping rough, even for a short while, has a devastating effect on a person's mental and physical health. It is also very hard not to get sucked into a culture of substance misuse, exploitation and abusive relationships.

This is why it is very important to get people off the streets as quickly as possible.

We provide food and toiletries in Welcome Packs for people when they come off the streets. And we give grants for clothing, as many people have nothing but the clothes on their back.

We also provide facilities for dogs, so that people can bring their dogs inside with them, as this is reason why some people stay on.



Dogs playing at The Beacon, a scheme for homeless veterans.



Building Confidence

As you can imagine, becoming and being homeless completely ruins your self confidence. Before people can establish a home of their own they need to regain their sense of self-esteem and purpose. Much of the funding we provide goes towards helping people do just that.

We pay for one-to-one counselling sessions; for transport to NHS appointments; for gym membership; for new well-fitting clothes; for toiletries; for identity papers; for musical instruments, cameras, drawing materials and journals; and for anything else that might help someone to rebuild their self-confidence and hope for their future.



Residents enjoy social events where they can make friends and build confidence.



Residents learn cooking skills through breakfast sessions funded by CHC.

Developing skills

Many people who have been homeless, particularly those who have been on the street for a while, lack the necessary skills to rejoin society. Our partners put together plans with the people they help and we provide funding for the particular items and support they need.

We pay for electronics so that people can learn to use digital technology. We fund courses for qualifications and certificates leading to work or further education. And we provide money for travel and specialist clothing or equipment needed for training and finding a job.

We also fund group activities within the schemes we support which help people to develop life skills and build positive relationships. We pay for cooking lessons; gardening sessions; breakfast clubs; book and film clubs; music studios; hiking expeditions and fishing trips; and any other activities which help to develop the friendships, interests and skills we all need in order to thrive.

Making a home

Moving into a new home can be a daunting experience, with new responsibilities and expenses. The people we help have very little money, and few possessions. Without financial assistance it can be difficult for them to create and maintain a long-term home.

Often the homes they move into have no furniture, no white goods, curtains or floor coverings. So we provide grants to help them buy what they need to set up a home. If there is a furniture reuse charity nearby we will buy furniture packs from them so that our funding goes further.

We also provide rent deposits, pay utility bills and will pay rent arrears where doing so enables someone to access or keep a home.



Paul and his new fridge funded by CHC.

Personal Stories

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



When Mary's relationship with a family friend broke down, she was left sofa surfing at friends' houses. Without savings, she entered a cycle of poverty and insecurity, and Mary was without a permanent address for over six years.

Now Mary is rebuilding her life, and moving into a home of her own. Church Homeless Charity supported Mary to purchase household necessities to help get her started with her new life.

Mary is very grateful to CHC for the support, allowing Mary to make her new house into a comfortable home, and not just another stop along the road.

"Finding a place of my own after years of not having any permanent address was a joyous occasion."



Emmanuel came to the UK from Cameroon when war broke out in the region. He had several health issues on arrival, many of which are still awaiting diagnosis. When he and his wife separated, he was left sleeping rough on the streets of Manchester.

Eventually an outreach team found and placed him in a service, and after working diligently with staff, he was eventually offered a one bedroom flat.

As a university educated Biochemist, he will have no problem getting work now he is settled and has a place of his own. Church Homeless Charity helped him to get back on his feet in the interim, providing him with a grant. He is now able to have his ten year old daughter over to visit, for which he is immensely grateful.



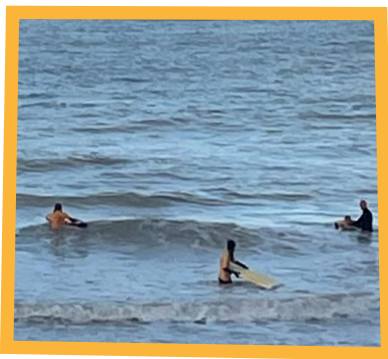
Jason was just fourteen when he was taken into care following a family breakdown. Like many of those in care, at eighteen he was left with little by way of support and expected to make his own way in the world.

Now he's starting out his adult life and has got himself an apprenticeship, but he needed support with the costs of setting up his first home.

Church Homeless Charity provided Jason with household essentials, including a desk where he can get his college work done. CHC also paid to top up his gas and electricity when he first moved in, before his first payments would have come through and to prevent him having to dip into the little savings he has.

Reasons to be cheerful

Since the summer, we've continued to fund fun events and activities for people who have experienced homelessness. Here are just a few of their stories from the last few months...



Four residents at a homeless service in Ipswich were able to get a surfing lesson in Norfolk thanks to CHC funding. The four spent the day learning with a professional instructor, as well as eating fish and chips and enjoying the seaside.

It's very rare for those who attended to get a chance to leave Ipswich due to costs, never mind to do something fun. They were very excited to try out surfing, and all of them had a brilliant time

"The fact I've never surfed before and got the opportunity to be taught was exciting. I loved the experience in general but I thought the person who was teaching us was very experienced and very helpful during the experience."



Residents at a scheme in Hull for adults with disabilities and learning difficulties had the opportunity to attend a multi-scheme event in Sheffield.

The group voted and decided to go bowling together, getting a chance to socialise in a fun environment with new people, forming vital social connections.

They played two games, and enjoyed food, drink and conversation throughout.

The residents who attended were able to gain confidence in themselves, form new friendships, and everybody expressed that they would like to attend similar events very soon!

"It was nice seeing everyone and getting out and about for a bit."



Young Families Service is a Yorkshire based scheme that provides accommodation for young mums and their babies, who may otherwise have nowhere else to turn.

Church Homeless Charity supported the scheme to purchase several items for the mums and children living at the scheme, including a trampoline that has been very popular with the littlest residents.

CHC also funded arts and crafts materials, which the little ones are now having a go at making Christmas cards with as they wait for Santa. The mums have gotten stuck in too, and it's provided a much needed activity during the evenings when the children are sleeping, helping the mums to bond.

"It has been lovely to see the residents working together and their children playing together."

Christmas Appeal

This Christmas, we're hoping to raise £25,000 for homeless individuals across England. With your support, we can keep rebuilding lives.

We understand that the cost of living crisis has affected many of our donors over the last couple of years, and we are immensely grateful for all the support we have continued to receive despite these difficult times.

Your support can make a massive difference, particularly during such an uncertain period where so many people are struggling to make ends meet. **£9 a month means we can give one more grant each year.**

Whether it's a new school uniform for a child whose mum has just lost her job, toiletries for someone fresh off the streets or an educational course for someone keen to get back into work; for a charity as small as ours, your kindness can change lives this Christmas.



Patrons The Rt Revd Dr David Walker; CMG; Susie Briscoe; David P G Cade; Ian Hay Davison CBE; William Guthrie; 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

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

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or charge my Visa / Mastercard / CharityCard / Maestro

Name _____ Card number

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Signed _____ Date _____

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

Charity No. 802801

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