



Church  
Homeless  
Charity



Spring 2026  
Newsletter





# Welcome

As spring arrives, we are reminded of the possibility of new beginnings.

For people experiencing homelessness, it can be a time marked by low confidence and feeling cut off from everyday life. The journey towards stability can feel daunting, but the schemes we support work tirelessly to prove that starting over is always possible.

One way they do this is by applying for CHC grants to fund activities such as arts and crafts, gardening, cooking clubs and days out. These activities give residents the chance to spend time with others, build confidence and take part in everyday experiences many of us take for granted.

## Hitting the right note in Cambridge

At a project in Cambridge, we have been funding a music therapy programme for residents – some at the very beginning of their recovery journey, often struggling with harmful behaviours and addiction.

Music therapy offers a non-threatening environment to explore feelings and build resilience. Whether they are picking up a guitar for the first time or reconnecting with a past passion, the sessions help residents find healthy coping strategies and a sense of belonging.



*Festive bingo lifted spirits for veterans in Middlesbrough*



*Music Therapy*

## Community through cooking in Kent

In a supported housing scheme in Kent, a CHC grant funded a weekly cooking initiative. Residents met in a communal kitchen to learn how to prepare healthy, budget-friendly meals from scratch, often using herbs and vegetables grown in the scheme's garden.

Participants said that the sessions gave them a sense of motivation and purpose. Several residents have since moved on to independent tenancies, taking these new skills and a handmade recipe book with them. As one participant put it: "Cooking made me new friends and gave me a purpose."



Cooking Club



First aid

## Skills for life in Yorkshire

In Yorkshire, one of our grants was used to fund a basic first aid course delivered by a professional ambulance crew. Participants learned practical skills including applying bandages, performing resuscitation, and using a defibrillator.

Residents reported how much they valued the opportunity to learn skills that could help them support their peers and the wider community. It was a simple, one-off event that provided both practical knowledge and a sense of empowerment.

**Your donations make these moments of connection possible.**

# Bob's story

## Loss of a job, then a home

Bob\* became homeless when his health deteriorated and he lost his job.

Determined to keep his home, he used his savings and took on part-time work, but it wasn't enough to cover his housing costs. Eventually, Bob lost his accommodation and began living in his car.

## Rebuilding from the bottom

Eventually, Bob was referred to a supported accommodation scheme, which gave him the stability he needed to begin rebuilding his life. During his time there, he engaged fully with the scheme - regularly joining communal activities and keeping busy with e-learning. However, his health declined further, leading to heart surgery and forcing him to stop work altogether.



## **Determined and resourceful**

After two years of rebuilding, Bob was offered a one-bedroom social housing flat. While he had managed to save some money, the costs of setting up an unfurnished home were daunting. The scheme provided a mattress and freezer, but Bob still needed other essential items to make the flat liveable.

## **The right support at the right time**

A £200 grant from CHC helped Bob buy a mix of second-hand and new items to furnish his flat. He carefully sourced everything himself, making the most of the funding. The support helped him settle into his new home and focus on his recovery and wellbeing.

**Thank you to our donors for making the final mile of Bob's journey possible.**

*“The grant took away the worry of equipping my flat. I am really excited to have my own space again.”*



# Facing homelessness in later life

A growing number of people of retirement age are experiencing homelessness for the first time. Homelessness schemes, including many of the ones we support, are seeing increasing numbers of people aged 60 and over arriving in temporary accommodation.

For many, this is something they never imagined happening in later life.

**50%**  
**increase in over 65s seeking homelessness support\***

## What is happening?

A number of factors are at play - many of which affect people of all ages. But for an increasing number of older people, later life is becoming marked by housing instability and uncertainty.

**The housing crisis:** with home ownership increasingly out of reach, more people are renting well into later life. This leaves them vulnerable to eviction or rent increases they simply cannot afford.

**The cost of living:** rising day-to-day costs, alongside savings that have gradually been depleted, mean many people no longer have the safety net they once relied on.

**Changing family dynamics:** relationship breakdowns, bereavement, and the loss of traditional family support structures can leave older people particularly isolated.

## How are older people affected?

Older people facing homelessness often carry a deep sense of shame. They may be less likely to search for help online or know where to turn for support. Without strong family networks, they can also become more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.

There is also what some charities describe as a 'support gap.' People who become homeless in their 50s or early 60s are often too young to access age-specific housing for older people, yet may have health needs that make general supported accommodation difficult. This can mean being placed in mixed-age and mixed-sex accommodation that is not always designed to support people with additional needs.

Temporary accommodation can take a heavy toll. For

someone already managing health problems, the stress and instability can make day-to-day life even harder. At the same time, many people in this age group find it difficult – or impossible – to return to work, leaving fewer opportunities to rebuild their financial stability.

Others avoid the system altogether. Many older people experiencing homelessness are 'sofa surfing' with friends or relatives. While they may not be sleeping rough, this kind of hidden homelessness is deeply unsettling and often prevents them from accessing the formal support that could help them move forward.

41%

increase in over 65s in temporary accommodation\*

## How donations help

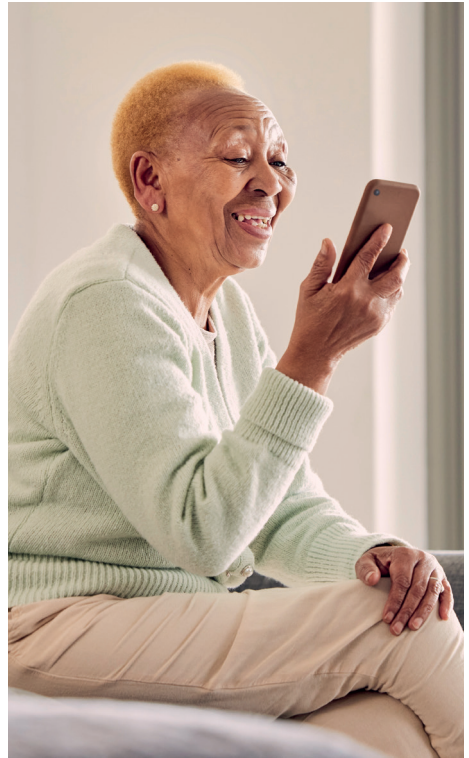
We recently supported a man in his early seventies who had lost his home when his landlord sold the property. With rents rising everywhere, he couldn't secure another private tenancy. Fortunately, Ian\* secured a room within a supported housing scheme, where his support worker applied for a CHC grant on his behalf.

The grant of £200 provided essential items, including a radio and a phone to connect with services and benefits.

He told his support worker, "I don't like to ask for much from anyone. But the new items mean that I can finally relax and start to look after myself."

Donations that become small grants offer stability, dignity and hope to people experiencing homelessness. A gift this spring could provide the essentials that help an older person settle into safe accommodation, protect their health, and begin to rebuild their life.

*(\*Figures apply to England, in the last four years.)*



24%

increase in over 65s  
renting privately\*

# A year of purpose: the 2025 Impact Report

Our latest Impact Report is now live on our website, offering a comprehensive look at our journey over 12 months. It details who we've supported and the communities we've reached, bringing the data to life through the stories of real people who have received our grants. These narratives highlight the tangible change made possible by our valued community of donors. We invite you to explore the report to see how your support drives this essential work forward.



# Donna's story

## **Sudden eviction, unstable beginnings**

Donna\*, 77, had been living in a privately rented home with her two adult children, both of whom have learning disabilities and anxiety. When her landlord issued a Section 21 no-fault eviction, the family suddenly lost their home. They were first placed in a hotel before moving to alternative temporary accommodation, causing a long period of upheaval and uncertainty.

## **The impact of uncertainty**

The stress was extremely difficult for the family, particularly for Donna's daughter, whose panic attacks worsened.

Donna was also unable to return to her former home to retrieve many of her belongings, leaving the family with very few household items.

Donna and her family were eventually offered a social housing property. However, starting again in a new home brought its own worries, especially without the basic items needed to run a household.

*“The support helped take away the worry of having to start again.”*

## **Practical support, a fresh start**

A grant from CHC helped Donna purchase essential items for the home, including kitchenware, towels and bedding. This practical support eased the financial pressure of starting over and helped the family settle more comfortably into their new home.

## **A stronger footing for the future**

The support made the transition far less stressful for Donna and her children, allowing them to begin this new chapter with greater security and peace of mind.

**Thank you to our donors  
for supporting Donna and  
her family during this  
difficult time.**





# Supporting older people experiencing homelessness

## A support worker's perspective

Older people experiencing homelessness can face particular challenges when living in supported accommodation that is often shared with younger residents. We spoke with Rosalind, who works at one of the schemes we support in Maidstone, about her experience of supporting older residents and the issues they face.



Staff at Lily Smith House.  
Photo c/o Riverside Group

## Have you supported older people in your service?

Yes. We have had some older residents, although there can sometimes be practical barriers. For example, we were recently unable to accept one referral because the individual used a mobility scooter, and the building could not safely accommodate it.

Accessibility can be a challenge in some supported accommodation settings, particularly in older buildings that were not originally designed with mobility needs in mind.

## **What has the experience been like for older residents living in your service?**

One of our current residents, Ron\*, has been managing well here because he has his own self-contained flat and does not have to share facilities with other residents.

Ron had been bidding for housing through the local authority's housing register and was getting close to being offered a property. Unfortunately, he was recently removed from the bidding process because the council needed additional information for a review. The message was sent online, and Ron did not see it as he is not very confident using computers or modern technology.

Situations like this can make it harder for some older people to navigate housing systems that increasingly rely on digital communication.

**'Old age' is not defined in law, and people aged 50–60 are unlikely to qualify as homeless on the grounds of age alone. Even people over pension age may not be accepted as 'vulnerable', and therefore may not be considered in 'priority need' for housing.**

## **Do older residents find it difficult living alongside younger residents?**

In some cases, yes. Ron has said that he sometimes finds it difficult mixing with younger residents and feels they sometimes approach him wanting money.

Differences in lifestyles and expectations can lead to tensions. For example, some older residents are less comfortable with loud music – or behaviour they feel shows a lack of respect.



## **What do you think works best when supporting older people who are homeless?**

In my experience, older people often cope better when they have their own space. Shared accommodation and communal facilities can sometimes be difficult, particularly when residents have very different routines or expectations about how shared spaces should be used.

Older people often need more support when moving into their own home after a period in temporary accommodation. Having the right type of housing is important, as well as ongoing support to help them settle in. Things like CHC resettlement grants can really help, as they allow people to buy items that encourage independence. That can make the transition much easier to cope with.

**3+ years**

**Research by Shelter shows that households spend an average of nearly three years in temporary accommodation while trying to access a stable home.**

After moving in, some older people may still need additional support to avoid issues such as benefit delays, rent arrears, neighbour disputes or even financial exploitation.

**Small grants can make a big difference for people rebuilding their lives after homelessness. With your support, we can continue helping people take that next step towards a stable home.**



# What support workers tell us about the impact of CHC grants

We regularly receive testimonials from staff at the supported accommodation schemes we work with. Their feedback shows just how important these grants have become, both for the people they support and for the staff trying to help them. Support workers often describe the grants as a vital lifeline. In many cases, it is the only financial help they are able to access for someone at a critical moment.

*"Thank you for your dedication and passion in helping those in need of things that some of us take for granted sometimes."*

*"You can't imagine how important your support is to us; you are truly helping to preserve their dignity."*

*"Your funding is so important to us – especially as you understand the need for funding that supports a holistic approach to wellbeing, healing and recovery from trauma."*

*"Your support gives people hope and makes a massive and lasting impact in their lives!"*





# Summer fun-draising!

This summer, we're inviting you to fundraise for CHC.

You don't need to run a marathon or shave your head! A summer BBQ, fête, or afternoon tea could be a fantastic way to support those in need.

Whatever you choose to do, we'll support you all the way.

Head to our website for ideas and fundraising resources.

**Could you be a CHC champion?**

**Each £200 you raise pays for one of our life-changing grants.**

Scan the code to access our fundraising page!



Registered charity number 802801.  
Registered address: Queen Mary's Hostel,  
28 Greencoat Place, London SW1P 1DX

