

AUTUMN 2026

Newsletter



**Church
Homeless
Charity**

Welcome

This issue is full of stories that represent resilience over adversity. You'll read about people who held on to hope until support arrived at just the right time.

Alongside those hopeful stories, we also want to talk honestly about one of the most difficult realities of homelessness: addiction.

Addiction can contribute to someone losing their home, while the experience of homelessness can start an addiction, or make an existing addiction harder to escape.

It's easy to fall into the trap of thinking that people 'choose' drugs or alcohol, or that they'd prefer to refuse help.

But, by the time someone is deeply dependent on drugs or alcohol, the illness is affecting the parts of the brain responsible for reward, motivation, judgement, and impulse control.

Behind addiction can be trauma, abuse, grief, mental ill-health or experiences from childhood that someone has never had the chance to process.

As we cover in the following pages – recovery is possible – and addiction doesn't have to be the end of someone's story.



Liam's story

Liam used to pride himself on working hard to support his wife and two children. But an unseen battle with mental health took hold, and he turned to alcohol and cocaine to cope. In a short amount of time, he lost his job, his marriage, and his home.

He lives in a supported accommodation scheme in Surrey, which keeps him off the streets and provides the structural support he needs to recover. It was here that Liam learnt about Church Homeless Charity and accessed one of our grants. The grant was a lifeline that matched his determination to get his life, and his pride back.

A routine that helps Liam rebuild

Like many people in supported accommodation, Liam lives on an income that just about covers the basics.

Following a diagnosis of ADHD and autism, Liam realised he had been using substances to manage his symptoms. One thing he missed after becoming homeless was exercise, which had always given him a sense of purpose and helped him regulate his emotions.

Thanks to our supporters, we provided Liam with a grant for membership at a local gym.





His support worker told us:

“Being able to focus on his physical health and doing an activity he enjoys has been pivotal to Liam’s recovery – helping him reach several months clean from substances.”

She added:

“It is amazing that funding like this is available to help people in difficult situations, and I think that the work that CHC does is so important, not only to provide the basics – but to help people access things that improve their lives.”



Looking ahead with confidence

Today, Liam feels more motivated, more settled, and more positive. He’s rebuilding his confidence and his relationship with his children – one manageable step at a time.

A gift of £200 helps someone like Liam leave homelessness behind.

This grant recipient asked to be anonymous.



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.



From lived experience to lasting change

For this issue, we spoke to Kerri Douglas, a powerful voice for people experiencing homelessness, a published author, and a sought-after speaker.

For 11 years, Kerri endured the hardships of homelessness. During that time, she was arrested and imprisoned under the Vagrancy Act of 1824, which meant people could be prosecuted simply for rough sleeping or begging. She describes this as deeply unjust, and it inspired her to campaign against the criminalisation of homelessness.

This year, the UK Government officially repealed the Vagrancy Act, a landmark moment credited in part to Kerri's tireless campaigning.

We're incredibly grateful that Kerri has shared her story with us. It reminds us that there is always hope for a different future.

Looking back, how did addiction and homelessness become connected in your life? Was there a particular turning point, or did one gradually lead to the other?

Although I was sleeping rough from the age of 13 and had been introduced to crack, I wasn't addicted until I was 19. When my son was taken into care, addiction became my way of masking the pain.

What do people commonly misunderstand about addiction?

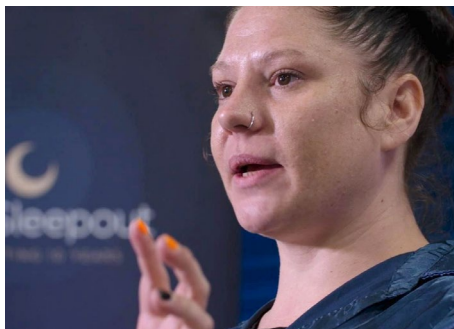
Addiction is often the mask of trauma. It isn't just about getting wasted; it's about blocking out pain, rejection, and abandonment.

How did addiction affect your day-to-day life while you were homeless?

In a strange way, it actually helped me. The one thing that was slowly killing me was also the thing that kept me alive. It motivated me to keep going.

What made it so difficult to move forward and begin rebuilding your life?

Trust was my biggest barrier. I'd been let down by so many people that I didn't trust anyone enough to accept help.



What's the best way someone can help if they meet a person sleeping rough?

Stop and talk. Buy them a coffee or something to eat, but let them choose. Sometimes being treated like a human being matters just as much as the help itself.

If every reader remembered just one thing about homelessness and addiction, what would you want it to be?

People experiencing homelessness have so much more to their story than addiction.



The practical support behind recovery

The reality of recovering from addiction and homelessness is that people aren't ready to make big changes straight away. Recovery often begins with meeting the most basic needs.

At this stage, it isn't about 'outcomes'. It's about creating stability and restoring a sense of independence and humanity.



Ben* turned to alcohol and drugs after the death of his son. He eventually ended up on the streets, where he lost his ID. Without ID, he could not apply for a bus pass. Vital when his addiction support meetings moved to a different area.



Having turned to drugs to cope with cerebral palsy and eight years of rough sleeping, **Nick*** arrived at a hostel with very little. Here, he was held back by his broken glasses, which only had one lens. A grant ensured Nick could see again, and socialise with confidence.



Alcoholism led to many years in and out of homelessness for **Fiona***. We supported her with a grant for clothes, shoes, and underwear, as she arrived at a hostel with only the clothes she was wearing.



After fleeing domestic violence, **India** became homeless and turned to substances to cope. In supported accommodation, she needed a phone to stay in touch with support services and a TV to help her relax in her room.

These grant recipients asked to be anonymous.

Grants that change lives

With a bespoke approach, we support beneficiaries in a way that makes sense to them. Here are some examples of grants that can make a difference.

£60 for a basic refurbished smartphone

A phone is a means to contact support services, use the Universal Credit online portal and stay connected with family and friends. Phones are now essential for managing everyday life. When you're trying to rebuild, it's even harder to do without.

£120 for trousers, tops, underwear and shoes

One of the most requested grants for someone recovering from addiction is a new set of clothes. Even choosing new clothes from a shop can help restore a sense of pride and show someone that they are worth investing in.

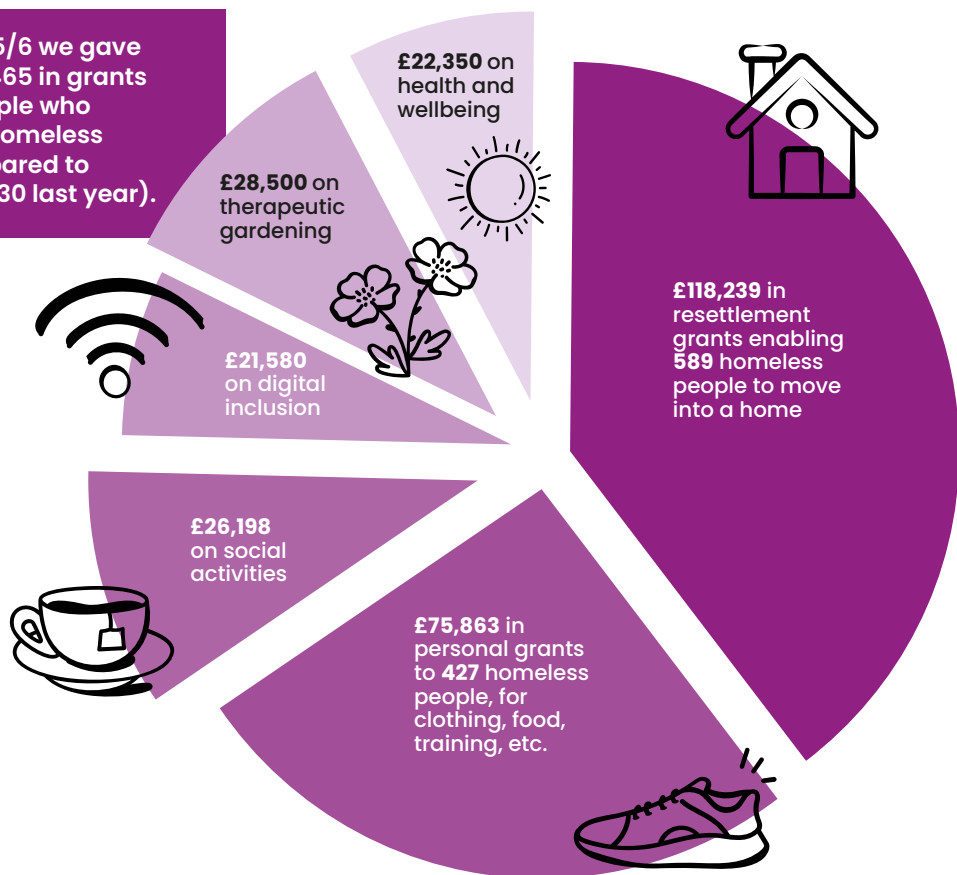
£200 for a group project such as gardening

Group projects create opportunities for staff in supported accommodation to engage with residents who might otherwise stay in their rooms or return to old habits outside the scheme. They also give residents a sense of purpose and pride in what they've achieved.

The maximum individual grant is £200, a small amount in relative terms – but each one is a stepping-stone that helps someone leave homelessness behind for good.

How are we spending donations?

In 2025/6 we gave £360,465 in grants to people who were homeless (compared to £292,730 last year).



We're proud to share that, over the past year, we have given more than £360,000 in grants to people experiencing homelessness. For a small charity, that's a significant achievement, and it's only possible because of our loyal donors.

Because no two paths out of homelessness are the same, every grant is individually tailored to fund the precise support a person needs.

This personalised approach ensures your generosity directly targets the exact barrier standing between someone and a stable place to call home.

We're a small team and keep our overheads low, allowing us to make every pound go as far as possible - and put as much of your support as we can into grant giving.

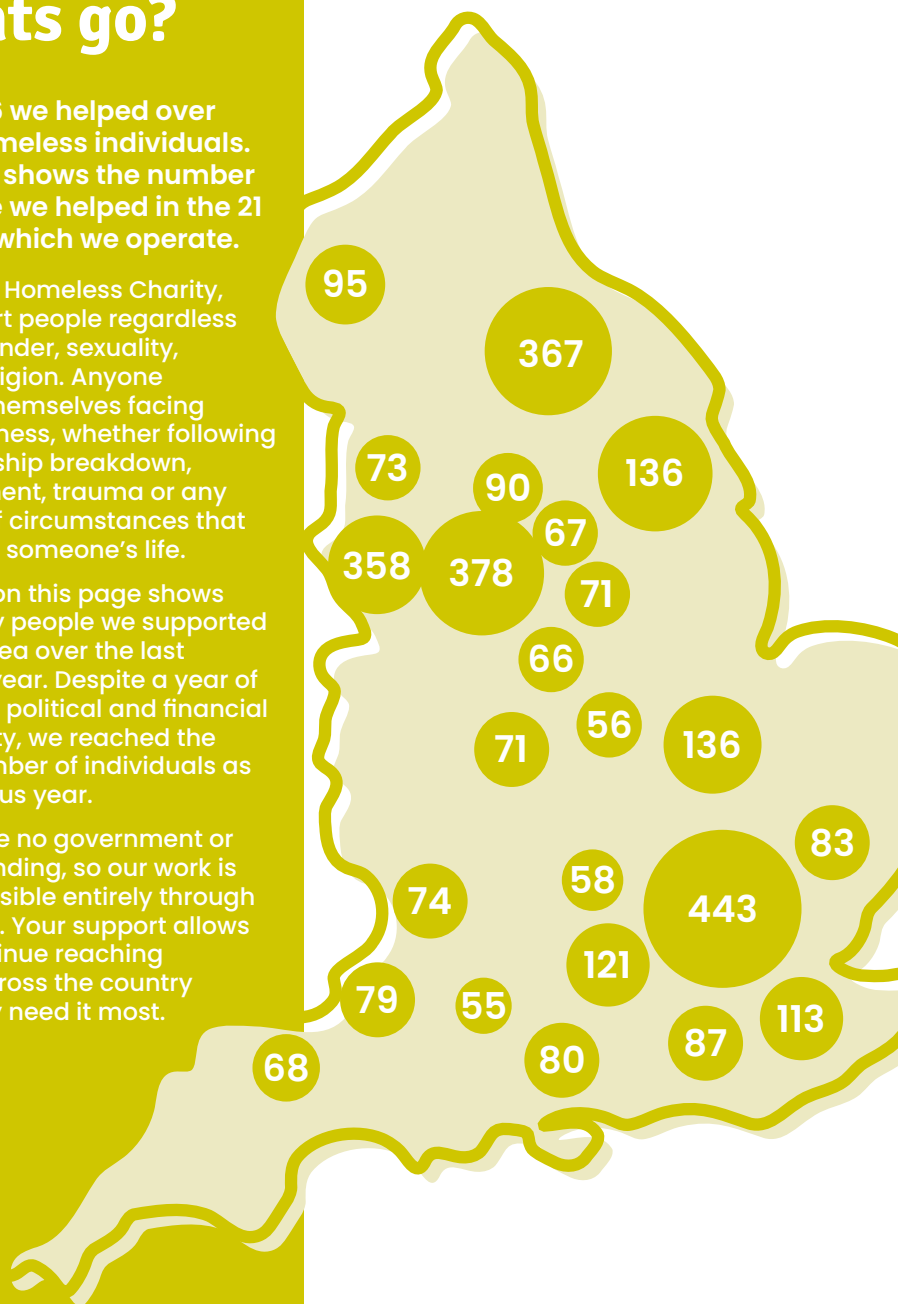
Where do our grants go?

In 2025/6 we helped over 3,200 homeless individuals. The map shows the number of people we helped in the 21 areas in which we operate.

At Church Homeless Charity, we support people regardless of their gender, sexuality, race or religion. Anyone can find themselves facing homelessness, whether following a relationship breakdown, bereavement, trauma or any number of circumstances that can affect someone's life.

The map on this page shows how many people we supported in each area over the last financial year. Despite a year of continued political and financial uncertainty, we reached the same number of individuals as the previous year.

We receive no government or church funding, so our work is made possible entirely through donations. Your support allows us to continue reaching people across the country when they need it most.





A summer to remember for homeless veterans

Veterans in North Yorkshire enjoyed a summer of projects and activities designed to reduce isolation and boost confidence.

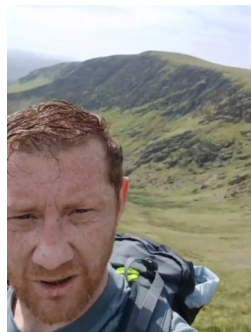
Residents at a scheme specifically for homeless veterans in North Yorkshire tend to keep to themselves,

which can make it difficult for staff to build relationships with them. Many live with complex PTSD, social anxiety, or physical injuries. Staff work hard to create a positive environment, but isolation can be a daily reality, particularly as the scheme is in a remote location.

What your support enabled

Highlights included a Lake District camping trip, where the veterans took part in ghyll scrambling and orienteering. (See cover photo.) One veteran remarked that the trip gave him an opportunity to stay away from alcohol for a few days and focus on his health.

If you follow us on social media, you may have seen footage of the veterans climbing Blencathra, also in the Lake District. One of the participants, Mark, filmed his experience and shared a heartfelt account of what it meant to climb



a mountain when, just five weeks earlier, he had been taking drugs on the streets of Manchester.

Continuing the theme of movement and exercise, a group also enjoyed weekly football sessions, culminating in a match against a different veterans' scheme. One participant said the football team gave him a sense of belonging, while another appreciated that it helped him sleep better.

The difference

Residents are now venturing outdoors more, socialising with each other – and realising that they don't have to face 'civvie' life alone.



Support from the Veterans' Foundation helps us to give life-changing grants to homeless veterans.





Scan the code to access our fundraising resources

How will you mark World Homeless Day this year?

The 10th of October is an important day for our charity as it marks World Homeless Day. The event gives us an opportunity to encourage people to look beyond the stereotypes and respond with practical support and compassion.

This year, we're inviting supporters, workplaces, churches, and community groups to fundraise with us to mark the event.

Whether it's a bake sale, sleep-out, quiz night, or a simple donation, every contribution makes a difference.

Head to our website to find fundraising resources and the latest version of our practical guide to helping people who are homeless.



Find out more:

churchhomelesscharity.org.uk/world-homeless-day-2026/

or scan the QR code.

World Homeless Day is a reminder that together, we can remove the barriers that keep people trapped in homelessness. We'd love for you to be part of it.

The next chapter:

We're heading to Wales!

For many years, Church Homeless Charity has supported people experiencing homelessness through schemes across England.

This reflects our history and heritage as a charity, but as the need for support grows, we know there is more we can do.

Homelessness is affecting all our communities, and numbers continue to rise. In March, data from the Welsh Government showed 10,509 adults and children living in temporary accommodation like hostels and B&Bs. Rough sleeping saw a 23% annual rise.

That's why we're delighted to announce that Church Homeless Charity will soon be supporting schemes in Wales as well as England.

This is an exciting new chapter for us. By welcoming Welsh schemes into our network of partners, more people will benefit from the support our donors make possible.

We're looking forward to bringing our experience to Wales, building new partnerships, and continuing to help more people each year.





Moments that matter – recent grants

Here are just some of the ways your donations have been used recently – and the moments that remind us why this work matters.

*Therapeutic garden
in Manchester*



A trip to Bridlington

It wouldn't be a summer recap without celebrating the beautiful gardens made possible with grants. A women-only scheme in Manchester now boasts a therapeutic garden for its residents. In collaboration with the Lancashire Wildlife Trust, the scheme has transformed the space into a welcoming environment for wildlife, as well as somewhere residents can grow their own produce. Vitally, it brings people together and helps to form lasting friendships.

The support worker commented:

"The benefits have extended beyond the garden itself. The ladies are now using the produce they have grown to prepare meals, developing new cooking skills, and confidence in the kitchen. Their increased sense of pride, wellbeing, and friendship has been wonderful to see."

At a scheme in Hull for homeless adults with learning difficulties, the transformed garden is now a welcoming space for all, achieving the residents' aim of attracting bees and butterflies. The scheme also enjoyed a trip to the seaside, taking in the sights, visiting the arcades and enjoying some fish and chips. Now an annual trip supported by CHC, it brings people together and gives them something to look forward to.

The support worker commented:

"Some of those who came hadn't been to the seaside for many years and said this was not something they would have done independently. They were very grateful that they had the support to go and also the funding to do so."



Pizza night in Surrey

Elsewhere, gathering over cooking and eating seemed to be the theme of the summer, as schemes know that this is a simple way to bring people out of their rooms. At a scheme in Swindon for people with learning difficulties, a breakfast club proved to be a huge hit. It gives people a healthy start to the day while creating a sense of belonging.

Participants commented:

“Breakfast Club helps me make better choices with food.”

“It makes me eat as I sometimes forget to eat altogether.”



Breakfast club in Swindon

At a supported housing project in Surrey for people with complex support needs, a pizza night helped bring together a diverse group of people meeting for the first time. It was a chance to prevent isolation and give residents something to look forward to.

The support worker said:

“Planning the evening is the most animated and excited that I have heard them.”



Open day and BBQ in Stroud



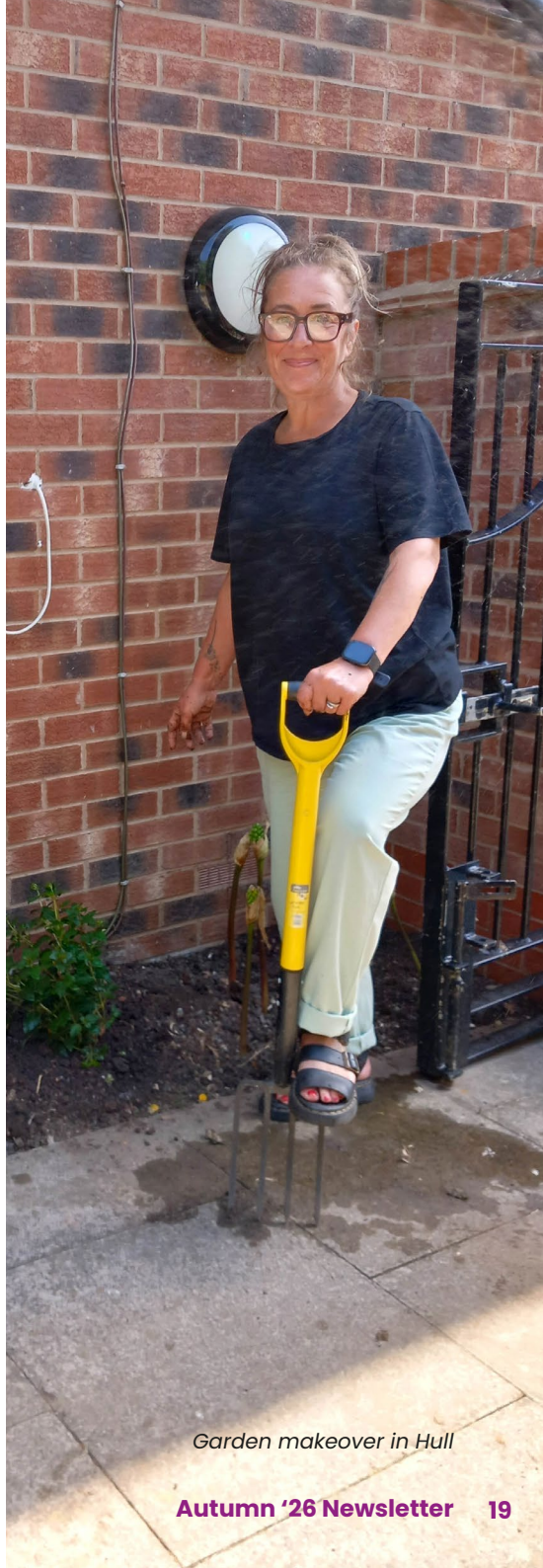
Garden crafts in Manchester

At a supported accommodation service for vulnerable young people in Stroud, residents planned a BBQ and open day to develop their planning and budgeting skills and build confidence. They invited external agencies and support services, helping to bring together the wraparound support that is so important for young people.

Many of the residents would not normally have met these agencies or had an opportunity to visit them. It also helped them see the opportunities available to them in the wider community.

A support worker wrote:

“Residents were able to show support and external agency staff where they live and what they achieve at the scheme.”



Garden makeover in Hull

Giving with confidence

At its heart, our charity is simple: money comes in from generous people like you, and grants go straight out to support individuals experiencing homelessness.

Because every grant we give is vetted by a support worker, you can be completely confident that your gift reaches the right people in the right way.

We can all feel helpless watching homelessness rise, but supporting us is a direct, reliable way to make an efficient impact.

How to make a donation



Donate online: Set up a quick one-off gift or a recurring monthly donation via our website.



Send a cheque: Mail your donation directly to our office address listed below.



Leave a legacy: Remember us in your Will to help rebuild lives for years to come.

Scan to head to the donation page



Registered charity number 802801.
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28 Greencoat Place, London SW1P 1DX

