Helping local homeless and vulnerable people rebuild their lives
There is no ‘easy-fix’ reason why people become homeless, for the underlying causes are usually complex and compound:

A recently published Local Government Association guide for local authorities¹, addressing health needs for the homeless, showed 41% of homeless people had a long term health problem (compared to 28% in the rest of the population) and 45% had a diagnosed mental health problem (compared to 25% of the population). According to a 2018 Guardian report the average age at death is 43, nearly half the UK life expectancy.

The introduction of Universal Credit has contributed to the situation by making it more difficult for people to access benefits. Universal Credit is accessed online and many vulnerable people don’t have the skills or equipment for this. Between 2009/10 and 2015/6 there was a 134% rise in homelessness in England. According to Public Health England, factors involved in driving the increase are ² continuing shortfalls in new house building; housing benefit reforms; and decreasing affordability of privately rented property.

As the figures show, homeless people often suffer multiple problems, in addition to being homeless and in poverty. And on top of that, their health usually suffers.

Other key factors contributing to homelessness are relationship breakdowns and being asked to leave the family home, alcohol and drug problems, and leaving prison.

Homelessness is a complex issue and that homeless people have multiple needs. It is not enough to put a roof over someone’s head. Their multiple needs must be addressed at the same time as housing someone, in order for the tenancy to succeed.

¹ Reaching Out – A Consultation with Homeless People 10 years after the launch of the Rough Sleepers Unit.
² Public Health England Evidence Review: Adults with Complex Needs (with a particular focus on street begging and street sleeping) Jan 2018.

“Our small charity does not receive any government funding and we are entirely reliant on the generosity of charitable donations. With your help we can continue to give support when and how it is needed.”

Marion Greenwood
(Volunteer & Chair of Windsor Homeless Project Steering Group)
Homeless people often suffer multiple problems, in addition to being homeless and in poverty.
The Windsor Homeless Project began following the death of a homeless man locally. He was found on a bench in the town.

Patrick O’Leary died in Windsor from cold and lack of care.

The Project was launched as a local charity in 2009 to prevent this happening again. We provide immediate and ongoing practical support to the homeless and vulnerable, in a respectful and compassionate way; empowering people to rebuild their lives. Our aims are to find solutions to each homeless person’s needs, by helping guests access housing and through counselling and practical help. We also aim to help those at risk of homelessness to stay in their homes.

Our aims are centred on building stability and long term prevention of homelessness for our guests. We aim to achieve this through providing more space, skills mentoring, community building and social enterprise.

There are multiple ways our community supports us; through volunteer hours, donations, event fundraising and participation in fundraising events.

Beyond the community, we work with NGOs, government bodies and corporations to support us in making donations. But we are facing a challenge and you can help.

All of the work we do, the hundreds of guests we support each month and the increasing instability of our economy means that our work is at risk. We need dedicated staff to commit their time to the running of our crucial local charity to allow for our goals to be achieved and provide a stable infrastructure for those who need it most.

This is why we are looking to partner with organisations who care about people, community and growth. Helping the homeless people on the street, the community support for those who are at their most vulnerable and growth in the capability of providing long term solutions.¹

By supporting our dedicated staff through supporting their salary means they can make this their sole priority and deliver the best for the charity. In return, we will share our progress, have regular reviews and be flexible whatever capacity you would like to be involved.

Our request is for a donation to enable our project’s growth and support the staff who have been employed by our Trustees. You will be helping to provide employment and supporting your local community.

Please consider us as your partner for charitable donations with results that you can see yourself.

¹ Community support for those who are at their most vulnerable is essential to maintain and grow long term solutions.
Our person-centred approach embraces a three-stage guest journey to rebuilding a new life:

1. **ENGAGE**
   Compassion and a listening ear are often the starting point.

2. **EMPOWER**
   Guests have their needs individually assessed through our person-centred approach.

3. **REBUILD**
   A choice of ongoing support ‘building blocks’ are available.
Compassion and a listening ear are often the starting points that gives guests the confidence to share their problems and seek our help to move forward.
We provide a drop-in centre four times a week in Windsor town, at Trinity Church on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and at St Stephens on Saturdays.

Introduction to the drop-in centres comes from the local community, outreach teams of our sister projects Windsor Street Angels, Foodshare and from local PCSOs.

Our homeless or vulnerable guests are welcomed with a hot meal, with warmth, with friendship and practical help. Our guests can shower, have their laundry done, get clothing and, equally importantly, receive help and advice.

Our approach starts with registration and assessment. Our team then identifies their individual needs, so that we can help our guests engage with appropriate local agencies and services, be that with health, housing or other issues, on their journey to improving their lives.

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Our dedicated and enthusiastic team comprises several specialist staff and some 50 volunteers. Overseen by the charity’s board of trustees, we are also supported by local churches and several prominent local organisations.

Our vision is for homeless people to be housed and fully supported into a sustainable, fulfilling, settled lifestyle. Stemming from our values, it reflects Maslow’s hierarchy of human needs:

Fact check #1:
60 weekly visits from guests to our drop-in centres
Step 2: Empower

We support the homeless in and around Windsor, and other guests who have complex issues that may impact their ability to maintain their home.

We currently have over 25 people regularly attending the Project at any one time.

Once registered with us, a guest has their needs individually assessed, through our person-centred approach. We work at the pace of each individual. Our aim is to empower people to make their own decisions and work towards their own goals. This means that we wait until they are ready to engage with us. We do not force anything on anyone.

At this second stage our approach is partnership collaboration. We work with many specialist agencies and organisations to meet the needs of our guests.

In addition to continuing hospitality and pastoral care, some examples of how we help here include:

• Physical health - registering with a GP for diagnosis and potential treatment
• Mental health - signposting for appraisal, treatment and ongoing care
• Addiction - agency referral towards rehabilitation and support
• Emotional - addressing safety, belonging, relationships and self esteem via counselling and pastoral care
• Practical - help filling in forms and IT, for benefits and housing applications, budgeting
• Support - with approaching the council and finding housing, furnishings and setting up home.

Fact check #2:
3500 hot meals were cooked by our teams in 2018
A guest has their needs individually assessed through our person centred approach.
A choice of ongoing support ‘building blocks’ are available.
Step 3: Rebuild

When guests have applied for housing and it is allocated, we help them set up home by finding and transporting furniture and household goods. And whilst a new home is a major milestone, post-tenancy support is crucial to people on their own.

So after being housed, guests needs are re-assessed. Continuing the support options at Stage Two, they are also encouraged to set their own goals to help rebuild their lives. A choice of ongoing support ‘building blocks’ are available, defined by previous users as being important in rebuilding their own lives.

Working with local specialist organisations, these ‘building blocks’ include:

- Budgeting - by developing good financial management
- Mental health - improving confidence, self esteem and resilience
- Psychological & spiritual health - redefining hope, motivation and purpose
- Stable lifestyle - developing life skills, routine and fulfilling activities
- Positive relationships - reconnecting with family and friends, building a network of safe people as a support network
- Talents and skills - discovering talents and new skills by attending courses
- Physical health - healthy eating, exercise, seeing GP, local leisure centre
- Work skills - rebuilding skills by volunteering, part time or full time work
- Personal aspirations - being empowered to dream, to hope and have positive goals for the future.

Users can continue to attend the Project for as long as they need after being housed, meaning we have a mix of homeless and housed guests at the Project, at different stages of their journey, providing mutual companionship.

Fact check #3:
18 guests rehoused in 2018 or in temporary accommodation
Recession & Divorce

I worked for fifteen years as a mechanic in the racing car industry. I had my own business and bought a lovely home. When the recession came I lost a lot of business and was unable to pay the mortgage. At the same time I was going through a divorce and my life fell apart. I lost the house, my marriage and my kids. To numb the pain I started to drink heavily. I was living in a car for a while. During this time I started going to the Project. It was a really friendly place. They listened to me and didn’t judge. I got some confidence back. They helped me find a flat, and sort out everything I needed to do. After a while I started attending AA and have been sober for 18 months. I am now looking for a job. The Project has helped me get back on my feet again.

The Lost Teenager

I was born in Windsor and went to Windsor Boys’ School. I messed around at school and was always in trouble. When I was a teenager I started doing weed, and then progressed to other drugs from there as I got older. My mum is an alcoholic and I didn’t get much attention as I was growing up, so I went off the rails and got in with the wrong crowd. My sister is an alcoholic too. I did go to college to do bricklaying, because my mum said I needed to learn a trade. So I was never short of work opportunities.

When I was twenty, my mum got a new partner who didn’t like me, and threw me out of the house. As I had nowhere to live, I couldn’t work. Someone told me about the Project, and I went along. I filled in a form about what I needed support with, and they helped me apply for housing. I have now been offered a flat in Dedworth, and I am seeing someone from the council (the Resilience worker) about my drug addiction. They have put me on a methadone script to help me get off heroin. With the support of the people at the Project, I think I can start to rebuild my life now.
Our staff and volunteers are dedicated to continuing the project’s good work and ambitious to build on its achievements in the years ahead.

In addition to maintaining our ongoing support, we’re keen to expand our provision:

**More Space / Improved Facilities**
With guest numbers increasing yearly, we need more space so guests can sit and eat comfortably; install a well-equipped kitchen & laundry facility; create a counselling room, a versatile activities area and storage for materials.

**Skills Mentoring**
New space for guests to rebuild their talents, by having on-site courses on creative art and writing, local history study, money management, IT skills, managing anxiety or depression and basic CBT techniques.

**Community Building**
After re-housing, help guests to rebuild positive relationships to prevent isolation. With partner organisations, engage guests in social activities, workshops and excursions, for their well-being and companionship.

**Social Enterprise**
To enable guests rebuild work skills, confidence and self esteem, we plan a community enterprise. Through training, such as in cooking and baking, vulnerable people can learn new skills, with products being sold locally.

**Our Vision For The Future**
Our aim is to procure our own property from which we can offer a one-stop overnight shelter for guests.

*In addition to maintaining our ongoing support, we’re keen to expand our provision.*
The complex needs of homeless and vulnerable guests deserves our time and help to resolve. It is through the generous support of donors and supporters that we are able to continue our important work.

We hope you share our vision to find local homeless a new home and enable homeless and vulnerable people to rebuild their lives.

As a company or organisation there are all sorts of ways you can help us:

**Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) - Charity of the Year**
Choose the Windsor Homeless Project as your organisation’s corporate charity, perhaps for a year, or better still on an ongoing basis.

**Cause-related Marketing Campaign (CRMs)**
Adopt the Windsor Homeless Project as a cause-related marketing campaign, attracting people inspired by your support of this good cause.

**Sponsorship**
Support our work by sponsoring a half-marathon team, cycling event, climbing a landmark mountain or any number of fun ways to raise funds.

**Events Fundraising**
Support our work through your own fun and fundraising events, such as a quiz night, theme day, sports competitions, cakes, fairs or shows.

**Payroll Giving**
Offer employees the chance to donate a monthly amount, it’s easy and with gift-aid boosting each donation via their optimum tax band.

**Volunteering**
There’s lots of ways groups of volunteers can help us from helping to cook welcome lunches, to some DIY decorating for guests’ new housing. Make a financial donation to help us continue to deliver our work, or let us know if you can donate goods or services in kind.

We are always in need of specific professional skills to help us with our accounts, our marketing and our website, to name a few.

There are so many ways, you’re sure to come up with some great ideas; and if you would like some help to explore any of the above avenues, or develop themes for your chosen ideas, we’d be pleased to assist.

**PLEASE HELP NOW!**
As a company or organisation, there’s all sorts of ways you can help us!
About WHP and our supporting organisations

Windsor Homeless Project
Windsor Baptist Church
Victoria Street, Windsor
Berkshire SL4 1EH
Email: info@windsorhomelessproject.org
Website: www.windsorhomelessproject.org

Trustees:
Canon David Hopgood, Chairman
Rev. Kat Bracewell
Rev. June Faulkner
Rev. Alan Wickens
Ms Kim Howell-Lewis
Mr Geoffrey Hudson
Ms Jane Deakin
Ms Marion Greenwood
Mr Geoffrey Hassett, Treasurer

Windsor Homeless Project drop-in centres:
Holy Trinity Church, Trinity Place
Monday, Wednesday and Friday 12.30-14.30
St. Stephens Church, Vansittart Road
Saturday 12.30-14.00

Windsor Homeless Project operates under the umbrella of Windsor Christian Action Charitable Incorporated Organisation No. 1154308.

Corporate Donors and organisations that have recently supported us include:
The Prince Philip Trust
The Shanly Foundation
Windsor and Maidenhead Christian Trust
Berkshire Community Foundation
The ACT Foundation
Many Local Community Churches
Waitrose & Partners
Tesco
Prêt à Manger
Palmers Removals
The Viceroy of India Restaurant
Cinnamon
Nandos
Eton College
Driven Forward
Resilience
Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead
Radian Housing
Thames Valley Police
Windsor Football Club

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