



'This project
helped me in a hard
situation in my life'

BRISTOL **CHURCHES** **WINTER** **NIGHT** **SHELTER**

2020 Impact Report





**‘Share your food
with the hungry
and give shelter
to the homeless.’**

Isaiah 58 v7

About us

Churches open their doors to provide a hot meal and shelter to 12 homeless guests each night over the winter months.



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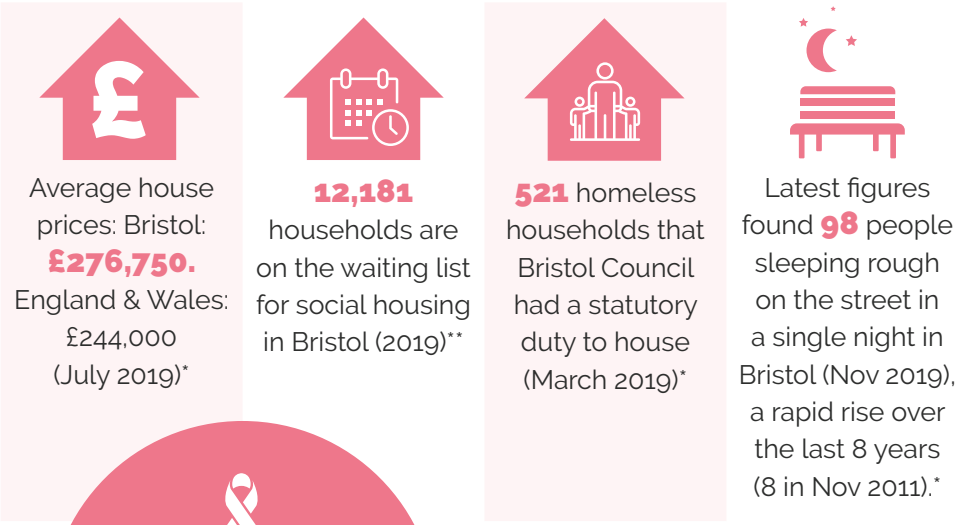
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Homelessness in Bristol

Rough sleeping and homelessness have **increased significantly** in the UK over the last 5 years. For people sleeping rough, or in temporary accommodation, **high housing costs**, **lack of social housing** and **benefit changes** are some of the barriers to securing permanent accommodation.

Data on homelessness may only show the tip of the iceberg, and doesn't include people sleeping in unsafe buildings or sofa-surfing etc. The vast majority of homeless people will sleep rough only when they have no other options.

In Bristol




St. Mungo's and other charities and community groups work with Bristol City Council to provide the vital support needed





Existing provision







*Key Facts Bristol 2019 (updated October 2019)
**Table 600: Number of households on local authorities' housing waiting lists.

The shelter's fourth year

217 volunteers took part in main training and **144** took part in one or more optional training sessions:

			
Conflict resolution	Mental health	First Aid	Drugs/alcohol awareness

The project planned to run from **1st January to 5th April**. St Mungo's assessed homeless individuals and referred those with **low support needs** to the shelter.

Start phase	Phase 1	Mid phase	Phase 2
 5 nights at 1 church – helped guests connect as group and adjust to the project	 7 churches hosted 1 night/week for 6 wks	 7 nights at one church (new this year – allowed guests time at one venue in between phases)	 7 more churches hosted 1 night/week for 6 wks

It finished 10 days early as guests were given rooms in hotels on 26th March due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

'It was good to know I had a bed at the end of the day and didn't need to sleep outside. This made me much less stressed!'



The Church's response

Finances

Churches made generous financial contributions to the project.

Venues

There were 16 churches involved this year of which 3 were new to the project.



Prayer

The project was prayed for by many and we knew the hand of God over the project every step of the way.

Volunteers

Volunteers from over 50 different churches took part in the project

Minibus

God's House lent their minibus which enabled the project to offer guests lifts to and from the less central venues.



'The project provided a great service and an opportunity to get back on my feet. I have lot of gratitude towards the whole project and couldn't give thanks enough.'

A night at the shelter

Many guests commented on how safe and cared for they felt at the shelter. They were often in bed early to get a good night's sleep for the day ahead – some had to wake up early to get to work.

'It was amazing to have a hot shower, clean bed and a good sleep!'



A typical night at the shelter



6pm

Volunteers set up



7-8pm

Guests arrive



8pm

Evening meal



8.30pm

Social time



9:30-10pm

Volunteer changeover



11pm

Lights out



6:30-7am

Volunteer changeover



7am

Lights on & breakfast



8:30am

Guests leave & volunteers set down

What else was on offer?



Hot showers at 7 venues



Wi-Fi at 10 venues



Toiletries, towels, pants and socks



Minibus to and from less central venues



Early wake up calls for working guests

Meet the volunteers

More than **600 volunteers** came together to deliver the project. Volunteers from over **50 different churches** took part and **24% were from the wider community**. From volunteering for a shift at a venue or cooking hot meals to washing bedding or driving the van or minibus, there were many opportunities to help the project run smoothly.

Refresh West kindly donated their van and drivers to move mattresses and bedding between the different churches.

GoodGym and **62nd Bristol scout group** provided teams of volunteers to help carry mattresses.

At The Well provided a free laundry service for the guests.



600+

volunteers
overall

24%

of volunteers
were from
the wider
community

480

volunteered
for one or
more shifts
at a venue.

42%

of venue
volunteers
were new to
BCWNS this
year.

94%*

of new
volunteers
felt more
confident at
the end of
the project

*Of 108 new volunteers that returned feedback



'I found the whole experience very positive and very rewarding. It was great to be part of such a fantastic initiative.'

The shelter's impact

The impact of good sleep and nourishing food for 3 months meant that guests could focus on other issues. For some who were already working, this meant saving up for a deposit. For others this meant looking for employment or learning new skills.



Meet the guests

St. Mungo's referred 23 guests to us over the 3 months. The shelter offered a safe place to stay for guests with low support needs. In fact some guests scored 100 or 1000 for how safe they felt out of 10!

'I felt very safe – a weight was taken off my shoulders during the coldest part of the year'

The group of guests bonded well and looked out for each other. It was wonderful to see the friendships that formed over time.

'I made new friends – it was like a family!'



All guests
were male



18 guests
were non British



10 guests
had disclosed
mental health
issues



8 guests
were new to
the street



1032 bed
nights offered
86% beds
filled over 3
months



9 guests
sustained work
3 guests
found work



3 guests
moved into
more secure
housing during
project



8 guests
stayed for more
than 60 days

Meet a guest



'I left my wife before Christmas because of a relationship break down due to mental health and alcohol issues.'

'I was sleeping on a park bench and I was nearly going to kill myself, but a lady stopped me and told me to try St. Mungo's for help. So I went to St. Mungo's and they gave me a place at the church shelter.'

'The church shelter has changed my life. The people are friendly and supportive. I am warm and dry, and I feel very safe now. My life is really different, and I am so grateful for everything.'

'St. Mungo's supported me to find a room in a shared house. I paid the deposit myself. I am so excited to have my own room and my own shower. I can't wait!'

Meet a church

Cotham Parish was one of the new venues this year working with St. Paul's Clifton



'The night shelter gave 50+ of us a common goal that brought us together in a unique way and grew many new and existing relationships. We were honoured to have the chance to make a difference to the lives of the guests, as well as share their journey, and this joyous backdrop to the shifts, catering and planning was a wonderful fuel to our relationships and sense of identity.'

Coronavirus

'I thought that the way the reorganisation of shelter arrangements was handled once Covid hit fully was amazing: swift, thorough and caring'

BCWNS response – additional measures introduced

Volunteer response – healthy volunteers stepped up to help

Church response – Salvation Army Easton lent its venue

Council response – 11 guests were housed in a hotel at the end of the project

BCWNS volunteer redeployment – 11 volunteered for St. Mungo's and 16 for Caring in Bristol

Welfare support – BCWNS collected donations of books, puzzles and games for the guests in hotels

Partnership

As well as churches, there were many other partners who made the shelter possible

Shelter partners

St. Mungo's referred guests and worked with them to find accommodation and employment.

Housing Justice gave support and recommendations for the shelter's framework.

Shelter providers

Refresh West provided the van service to transport mattresses and bedding between venues.

GoodGym and **62nd Bristol Scouts** helped to carry mattresses to/from the van.

God's House Church provided the minibus service.

At The Well provided a free laundry service for guests

Training providers

Red Cross – First Aid Awareness

ACE Bristol – Mental Health Awareness

Richard Drake, Julian Trust – Conflict Resolution

Bristol Drugs Project – Drugs/alcohol awareness

Other partners

Avon Fire and Rescue gave fire safety advice

inHope provided governance and oversight

Caring in Bristol lent mattresses

Christian Action Bristol helped with publicity

Get involved



For the fourth year, the shelter has filled a gap in provision for those wanting to find stable accommodation and move away from homelessness. However, it can only run from the generosity of churches in Bristol and the wider community.

How could you be involved in 2021?



Volunteer



Pray



Offer a venue



Offer a van



Offer a minibus



**Offer free
laundry service**



Donate

Sign up to tell us
how you want
to be involved:
www.bcwns.org