

From: [Housing Justice](#)
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Housing Justice News

From homelessness to belonging

Welcome to the latest Housing Justice Update!

As always, the Housing Justice team has been hard at work alleviating homelessness and we are delighted to announce that our Citadel England programme is now up and running. This is the culmination of several years' work and we have welcomed 12 new members of staff to work with volunteers in Bristol, Cornwall, London, Sheffield and Hastings. You can read all about it below.

We attended the Labour Party Conference in Liverpool where we met with a number of MPs to lobby for sufficient recognition and funding for community responses to homelessness. We hosted the Conference Sunday Morning Church Service in partnership with Christians on the Left and Christians Against Poverty. We also welcomed delegates to a drinks reception, and encouraged everyone to sign our open letter to the Rt Hon Angela Rayner MP which you can sign on our Homelessness Sunday webpage [here](#).



We are busy preparing for the winter season and are expecting that the numbers of people being forced into rough sleeping will be even higher than last year due to the lack of affordable homes, our hostile immigration system, and the ongoing cost-of-living crisis. Our network of winter night shelters met for their annual planning conference last week, details of which are below.

We are pleased to announce that we have partnered with Run for Charity to launch an exciting new programme of fundraising Challenge Events all over the world. So, whether you are into running, cycling, swimming, bungee jumping, climbing, walking or doing a virtual event – we have got it covered! Have a look at our [new Challenge Events webpage](#) to find out how you could have lots of fun with your friends and family while supporting Housing Justice.

With all best wishes,

Bonnie Williams, CEO



Homelessness Sunday

Homelessness Sunday took place on 6th October and we were pleased to once again provide resources for churches wishing to hold their own Homelessness Sunday service. Our dedicated webpage included [our new Night Shelters video](#), relevant prayers, hymns, junior church resources, notes on the lectionary reading from the former Archbishop of Wales, the Most Reverend John Davies, suggestions regarding how churches can alleviate local homelessness, as well as plenty of general information about homelessness.

We were also fortunate to be given the opportunity to record a special Homelessness Sunday service at St Barnabas, Ealing, for the Church of England's online Sunday service which you can watch [here](#).



Free Will Month

October is Free Will Month and we are offering supporters wishing to leave a legacy to Housing Justice (no matter how large or small) the opportunity to make their will for free with Housing Justice throughout the month. You can find out more [here](#).

**Have you got your
house in order?**



**Make your free will with
Housing Justice this October**

Citadel England Launch

In response to the rising number of people being forced into homelessness and rough sleeping across England, we launched our innovative homelessness prevention programme, Citadel, in Bristol, Cornwall, London, Sheffield and Hastings in August.

As you may know, we have been running Citadel across Wales since 2020 and have achieved excellent outcomes through matching people who have experienced, or are at risk of, homelessness, with dedicated local volunteers.

Support from Citadel volunteers takes many forms - it could be support with finding and sustaining a tenancy, decorating and furnishing a home, managing bills and budgeting, joining a social club or community group, attending appointments, or just having a cup of coffee and a chat - it all depends on the individual.

We have now recruited our staff teams and are currently looking for volunteers in Bristol, Cornwall, London, Sheffield and Hastings. You can find out more [here](#).



Citadel Wales

Our Citadel teams across Wrexham, Neath Port Talbot and Swansea have been busy working with trained volunteers to support individuals in the Project.

Wrexham Citadel recently took part in a six-week 'Healthy Cooking on a Budget' course with Groundwork North Wales. A group of volunteers and people supported by Citadel learnt how to cook various inexpensive and simple meals with the support of each other. The group chose their own recipes for each week and made pasta and potato salads, cottage pie, sausage casserole, air fryer pasties, Chinese "fakeaway" and apple crumble. We learnt how to meal plan and safely store and reheat food. One of our Masterchefs said that he has learnt a lot from the sessions and the other group members. He also enjoyed sharing his own tips with others.





The Citadel Swansea team has had a very busy and successful time over the summer, with six new tenancies signed in July and two in August.

Individuals we support have benefitted from Citadel completing DAF furniture applications and sourcing donated furniture for them, as well as kitchen electrical items via the 'Direct Food Support' grant from Swansea Council. This has provided microwaves, toasters, toasted-sandwich makers, and kettles, as well as electric cookers for those that needed them.

We now have registered with 'Cwtch Mawr' in Swansea which is a local initiative between a charity and Amazon. This provides us with resources to apply for household items such as cleaning materials, toiletries and small items for each person moving into their own home.

We also continued to access the 'Prevention Fund' which means that every flat and new tenancy has brand new carpet and underlay, turning bare concrete floors into a warm new home.

Of course there is much work being done to set up utilities, ensure council tax reduction is applied for, update UC journals and addresses etc, so practical help from Citadel volunteers has been invaluable as always. Some of our volunteers have also helped with decorating flats, and with collecting and delivering larger items in a volunteer's van.

Before Citadel:



After Citadel:



Citadel volunteers get together for free pizza and training:



Night Shelters Annual Conference in London

We welcomed nearly 100 representatives from night shelter and emergency accommodation providers in our Winter Night Shelter Network for our annual conference on 3rd October.

Delegates gathered at our offices in London to enjoy a day of practical training delivered by Praxis, Homeless Link and Young Roots; future planning; and insight from sector experts including Ian Brady, Executive Chair of the London Housing Foundation, and frontline experts from the Network.



Spring Transitions Fund

The Spring Transitions Fund 2024 is the third successive annual funding programme designed to support London Winter Night Shelters in ensuring shelter guests do not return to rough sleeping in the spring when shelters typically close. This is achieved by providing an extended timeframe to work with individuals through the use of 'bridging' accommodation, whilst stable move-on accommodation options are sourced.

It has been a component part of the Equipping Shelters Project run by Housing Justice and supported by the Mayor of London since 2018. Funding for the project is provided by the Mayor of London and the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and contributes to a series of measures in London to address rough sleeping.

The majority of shelter network guests are people who have struggled and/or are struggling with navigating, negotiating, and often even just finding and engaging with the myriad agencies and services that now comprise a very mature and complex homelessness sector in London. Projects spend a lot of time with their guests unravelling the journey they have been on and the often multiple pathways they have gone down in order to determine their best way forward to a successful outcome.

This year, eight out of 15 projects that applied for the funding were successful, and facilitated successful move-ons for 85 individuals. Over the three years of the Spring Transitions Fund, projects have facilitated successful move-ons for 238 individuals who would otherwise have returned to the streets when night shelters close at the end of the winter season.

London Migrant Homelessness Projects

Our Hosting and Refugee Lodgings teams have been hard at work alleviating homelessness for destitute individuals in and around London.

Refugee Lodgings Project:

- Our Lodgings Project has provided more than 500 nights of accommodation for newly-granted refugees with nowhere to sleep.
- Two of our of Lodgings Project tenants have moved on into their own accommodation.
- 100% engagement rate with EET (Education, Employment Training) from tenants in the Project.
- Two people are taking CSCS construction courses, one is in full time

employment and two are studying ESOL courses.

- Two landlords have decided to have another lodger after a successful first experience.
- There have been no placement breakdowns to date.

London Hosting Project:

- A guest who was in the Hosting Project for nine years recently gave birth to a baby girl.
- A former guest moved into her own flat in Maidenhead after three years in the Hosting Project.
- Two hosting guests enrolled in college courses and one was offered a scholarship at Birkbeck University.
- One guest received her status and is now rebuilding her life after arriving in the UK in 2015, and having been destitute since that time.
- A successful new placement began in July: the guest describes her new hosts as her 'second family'. They often share meals and cook for each other and the hosts really enjoy the guest's Nigerian cooking. The placement has finally given the guest a place to relax and feel at home, and she has been able to start a Level 2 course in Health and Social Care.
- Having received her status in February and not having been in education or worked since she was 16, a 55-year-old guest has started a Level 1 course in Health and Social Care at college and is working towards a career in support work.



We are pleased to have recently launched the Hosting Project Feedback

Committee. The Feedback Committee meets regularly and comprises a group of people who have been supported by Housing Justice sharing feedback with us. Their experiences will help us to develop our projects and improve the way we support people experiencing homelessness in London, particularly those who are not from the UK.

We are excited to be launching our Shared Goals Project in November. We will be organizing weekly football games with Housing Justice staff and service users from all our projects. Watch this space for updates.

Find out more about becoming a Resident Landlord [here](#) and about becoming a host in the London Hosting Project [here](#).

Hosting in Wales

We were delighted to hold a stall at the Eisteddfod this year. The National Eisteddfod is the biggest cultural festival in Wales, held every year in different parts of Wales to celebrate Welsh culture. This year, it was held in Pontypridd in Rhondda Cynon Taff.

We were based in a lovely wooden hut for eight days. Each day, hosts and guests engaged the public in conversation about homes, homelessness, and belonging. People shared their experiences of homelessness and engaged in activities by writing down what home means to them. Guests and hosts spoke some Welsh in a supportive environment surrounded by Welsh music and dancing, creating a sense of connection between cultures. One guest in the Hosting Project said, 'I feel Welsh.' We networked with charities, organisations, and faith groups, celebrating Wales's vibrant culture and community spirit at the Eisteddfod.



Faith in Affordable Housing

Our FIAH Wales Project Manager, Bex Kentfield, visited Trinity Court on 15th July, following the greatly-anticipated completion of re-development works on this former Presbyterian Church of Wales site.

For more than a century, the Trinity Chapel in Pencoed provided a religious sanctuary for English-speaking locals to worship. The Chapel closed in 2017 due to falling congregation numbers and Wales & West Housing Association has now re-developed the site as Trinity Court, providing safe and secure homes for local people.

Wales & West Housing Association worked with FiAH to buy the site for much-needed affordable housing, and construction partners P+P Builders of Torfaen then moved in to re-develop the land into 12 one-bedroom apartments.

At the front, the old Chapel gates and boundary walls have been renovated and two of the former Chapel pews have been kept for residents to sit on in the private rear garden.

A spokesperson for the Presbyterian church said: “When Trinity Chapel was opened in 1907 there were very few English-speaking chapels, and for over 100 years it was a place of worship for English-speaking congregations. We’re

pleased to see the site is continuing to support the local community by providing affordable housing.”

Most of the residents who have moved into Trinity Court were affected by the current housing crisis in Wales, and with a shortage of affordable homes, many were living in temporary accommodation. They were among the hundreds of people who are registered on Bridgend County Council’s housing waiting list for a one-bedroom affordable home.

Falklands veteran Ian had been waiting for years for a home he could afford to rent following the breakdown of his marriage. The father-of-three was living with his daughter and her family in a makeshift bedroom in their dining room, and was desperate for his own space.

“My daughter has been my rock. She converted her dining room into a bedroom for me and I’m really grateful to her, but I’m pleased to have a place of my own so they can get on with their family life. I tried to find a place of my own, but all the private flats were way out of my price range,” says Ian, who is unable to work due to a series of illnesses. “My quality of life will improve so much with my new flat. My son lives close by, and I can walk to his house to see my grandchildren and they can visit me. It’s going to be so much better for my mental health.”

Trinity Chapel before and after development:





To find out more about Housing Justice's work, please click [here](#).



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