

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

Mobilising Christian action on homelessness and housing need through love, justice, advocacy and nurture

Welcome to the latest Housing Justice Update where you will find news from all our projects in England and Wales. We hope you enjoy finding out what we have been up to since our last newsletter!

Fundraising

Many congrats to our Citadel Co-ordinator, Mandy, who recently completed another BogAthlon and raised over £300 towards Citadel work in Neath Port Talbot!



Tough Mudder South West

A huge 'thank you' to the team of HJC supporters, including our HJC Performance Manager, Stacey, who took part in the Tough Mudder South West in August to raise much-needed funds for HJC.

They scaled walls, crawled through muddy ditches, ran, slid, and even received an electric shock, raising just under £2,000 for us! Thank you very much!



Swim Serpentine

Our intrepid team of wild swimmers swam a mile in September to raise money for Housing Justice. Unfortunately, there was a problem with toxic blue green algae in the Serpentine and so the team were not able to take part in the event as planned, so they each did the challenging swim in their own local reservoirs instead. Well done all!



Hosting in London

Our Hosting team in London has been busier than ever with lots of good news to share since our last update:

- Five people have moved out of hosting and into their own accommodation since June.
- 15 people are being hosted across 10 boroughs - 75% of whom are women.
- One female guest just received a positive decision on her case after almost four years in the Hosting project.
- The youngest guest in our Hosting project has enrolled onto a science course at Ealing College.
- Two new hosting placements started at the end of September.
- Two new hosts have joined the project and two former hosts have returned to the Housing Justice family.

We would like to say “goodbye and thank you” to Rev Julie of St Peter’s Church who has been at the heart of the project for many years and will be dearly missed by us all, especially the guests who have grown to love, trust and admire Julie through the parties she hosts at the church.



Rachel was referred to us in March 2023 when the night shelter project she had been staying in closed for the season. Rachel has a real creative flair and enjoys sewing and making jewellery. The classes she attends have helped with her mental health and wellbeing as she navigates the complexities of the Home Office system.

We were able to raise funds for a sewing machine for Rachel so she can practice her skills and make her own garments whilst staying with her host.

Rachel was recently granted her Leave to Remain and hopes to set up her own creative business once she is settled into her own home.

If you would like to find out more about being a host in London, please click [here](#).

Hosting in Wales

Our Seeking Sanctuary team has now provided over 2,650 safe nights to people in Cardiff and Newport when they had nowhere else to go, and has been working hard to help hosted guests move-on into their own homes.

We are pleased to introduce our new Hosting Officer, Nia, who will work alongside Halima and Romy. Our former Hosting Officer, Keira, is continuing to work with HJC in a freelance role to support volunteer and host recruitment, which remains a challenge.



We are thrilled to have had four successful move-ons since our last update with one individual having been granted refugee status and moving into private rented accommodation, two people moving into accommodation for newly-granted refugees run by a partner charity, and one individual moving into Home Office Accommodation upon becoming eligible for this.

Re-settling in a Nation of Sanctuary

We are delighted to announce that Victoria has joined our Comic Relief-funded project as a Ukrainian Re-Settlement Co-ordinator to help us get this project off the ground. As a Ukrainian speaker, Victoria will fill a much-needed gap in our team's skill set as our previous Ukrainian speaker left us when the Airbnb project ended in June. Welcome Victoria!



The team has been helping to re-settle Ukrainian refugees and one individual we have been supporting since June recently moved into his new flat in Newport. We had previously been in touch with the landlord via our Host Support Service which enabled us to facilitate this move for him.

We recently conducted a two-day site visit to Pembrokeshire and met with one family that we have been supporting. After a great deal of work from our Co-ordinators, the family has finally secured a rental property in North-East England and will be leaving Wales once this is finalised.

Ukraine Project by Numbers

Visited 7 Welcome Centres on 31 occasions

Held 77 in-person conversations with guests

Contacted 147 agencies and landlords

Successfully arranged 26 viewings

Emergency Accommodation in England

Night Shelter Transformation Fund

We are pleased to announce that we have awarded £3.4 million in round two of the Night Shelter Transformation Fund. This will be used to provide accommodation for people rough sleeping, day services, move-on support, and capital transformation to buildings to enable projects to move from communal to single room settings.

Night Shelter Lettings Network Website

The Night Shelter Lettings Network has a new home at <https://nsln.housingjustice.org.uk/>. The new website has been designed to improve upon the work we have been doing with night shelters in London over the last year.

For as long as private sector estate agents and landlords have advertised property that is available for those who can only pay through housing benefit, there has been no single location where homeless sector professionals and their guests can see what is available in real time. The NSLN changes this. It

provides information on all property that is accessible to those on housing benefit in London and the surrounding area, updated in real time by our team at Housing Justice. It gives more agency to those who are homeless, as their caseworker is able to provide them with access to this website so they can search for available property in their desired areas. The guest or caseworker is then able to email the agent/landlord through the website to arrange a viewing. Essentially a 'Rightmove' for the homeless sector.

Those that are eligible due to being guests of night shelter providers in our network, are also able to apply through the website for any upfront costs that they may be asked for. Our team at Housing Justice will then negotiate with the agent/landlord and check documentation to ensure they are abiding by statutory minimum standards.

We hope that this streamlined system will encourage more estate agents over time to offer their properties to those who are experiencing homelessness, improve the capacity of caseworkers to help their guests, and empower guests to improve their situation.

Grant programme for London

Before Christmas, we will be launching a new grant programme (with funding of approximately £200k) to support emergency accommodation providers to help guests move on from rough sleeping.

Quality Mark

Over the last year, we have been reviewing and overhauling the Quality Mark - a quality assessment and accreditation scheme for emergency accommodation. The Quality Mark has been reviewed to take into consideration the post-pandemic landscape, with a heightened focus on development and organisational learning. We hope that in creating additional sector benchmarking, we can all work towards improving the emergency accommodation offer nationally and achieve positive outcomes for guests using these services.

Nine projects have already confirmed they would like to be part of the revamped process this winter, with more interested and exploring the possibility of taking part.

The resources and criteria checklist will sit opensource on our website as a free tool for new and existing services to self-assess and identify areas for improvement. From there, services can then choose whether to go ahead with

the full Quality Mark assessment and accreditation. Work is ongoing to have an interactive assessment portal embedded on the website that enables projects to evaluate themselves, and upload documents for the Quality Mark assessment, creating a central point for collating resources and tracking the progress of assessments.

The Citadel Project

The Citadel team has been supporting a lady in Wrexham whose long-term partner sadly passed away suddenly in April.

She struggled following his death, in part because he had previously looked after all the bills and correspondence. She found herself extremely isolated and struggling to do the everyday things that she had heavily relied on him for, and she also had a huge loss in income.

We have been working alongside Financial Inclusion in Wrexham County Borough Council to support this lady. They have assisted her to apply for additional benefits and to have a full learning disability assessment.

Our Citadel Co-ordinator Jo and our volunteer have supported her to change to a more accessible GP and manage her prescriptions, and have helped to reduce her social isolation by linking her with community activities and services.

She has started attending a choir and swimming regularly. This has all helped her wellbeing and independence while she waits for housing in a more suitable area where she will have more family support.

The Minister for Climate Change, Julie James MS, visited our Swansea Citadel project this month. She met our staff and volunteers, but most importantly the people we support, to see what difference we are making through our work.

Our Director, Bonnie, had some quality time with the Minister to highlight the success of our project and how we could be doing more across Wales.



Faith in Affordable Housing (FIAH)

Our work to support churches of all denominations to re-purpose derelict and disused church land to create truly affordable homes is moving at pace, thanks to the hard work of our Faith in Affordable Housing teams in England and Wales.

In Wales, we are pleased to announce that our first project with the Methodist Church is up and running and moving into the acquisition stage. We are working with Melin Homes, a leading registered social landlord based in South-East Wales, and will have more news to update you on soon. This project has led to HJC being connected with two other Methodist sites that are up for sale and which we hope to progress.

We currently have three FIAH sites under construction in Wales, and these will result in the creation of 51 new truly affordable homes. We also have six FIAH sites moving towards the acquisition stage and these will result in 80 new homes once completed.

In England, we currently have 30 active sites and presented at the Methodist Church conference on homelessness and housing on 5th October. We will also be representing the Archbishops Housing Executive Team when we present their plans at the Radical Housing Conference in Bristol later in October.

Free Will-Making Service

Is making a will one of those jobs that you never get round to as you think it will be too time consuming and expensive?

Housing Justice is offering a free will-making service to supporters who would like to leave a lasting gift to Housing Justice in their will.

Find out more [here](#).

**Leaving a gift in your will to
Housing Justice
costs nothing in your lifetime, but
the impact of your legacy on those
experiencing homelessness will
endure for years to come.**

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



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