

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

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

Housing Justice New Year Newsletter

Happy New Year and welcome to the latest Housing Justice Update! We hope you had a wonderful, relaxing Christmas spent with family and friends.

Thank you very much to those of you who have so generously donated to our Christmas Appeal – we are very grateful for your support, without which we would not be able to do the invaluable work that we do across England and Wales. If you have not yet had the chance to make a donation and would like to do so, please click [here](#). Thank you.

The team has been very busy over the last few months and some of you may have seen the news that our wonderful Director for Wales, Bonnie Williams, has been appointed as CEO of Housing Justice when Kathy Mohan OBE retires in early April. We are delighted with this well-deserved promotion and will be beginning the recruitment process for Bonnie's successor shortly.



We hope you enjoy reading all about what the team has been up to below. You can find out more about our work in London by watching our new video

featuring our brilliant Director for England, Jacob Dimitriou, [here](#).

Calling Walkers in London!

Could you, your friends and family walk either a 10k, a half marathon or a marathon route through London overnight to raise much-needed funds for Housing Justice?

The London Walk is night-time mass participation sponsored event for London-based homeless charities on Friday 22nd March 2024 and more than 300 people are expected to join the fun.

The route starts and finishes from St Martin-in-the-Fields and passes a number of famous London landmarks.

If you would like to find out more about taking part in this sponsored walk for Housing Justice, please email: j.whitney@housingjustice.org.uk

Launch of the London Rough Sleeping Charter

We were pleased to launch the London Rough Sleeping Charter in conjunction with London Councils, the London Mayor's Office and other homelessness sector partners in December.

Following extensive planning and collaboration with partners including the Connection at St Martin's, London Councils, The Passage, Groundswell and the YMCA, the Mayor of London Sadiq Khan, launched the London Rough Sleeping Charter at St John's Church, Waterloo.

The Charter is a public commitment for Londoners to work together to tackle rough sleeping in our capital and is supported by the 'Life off the Streets' group, a coalition of organisations working together to end rough sleeping in London, as well as more than 100 local organisations and businesses.

The Charter sets out six principles for signatories to uphold including:

- Accepting that whilst people sleeping rough may have problems, they aren't problem people
- Recognising that everyone rough sleeping is unique, and there should be meaningful options for all – regardless of immigration status

- Ensuring that people sleeping rough are safe from violence, abuse, theft and discrimination, and that they have the full protection of the law.

It also includes key actions that signatories commit to undertake and support:

- Acknowledging people when they talk to you or ask you for money, even if you decide you would rather not give it to them directly
- If you see someone sleeping rough who needs help, notify Streetlink London
- Volunteer, donate or support a charity which has joined the pledge.

You can find out more about the London Rough Sleeping Charter and sign the pledge [here](#).



Mayor of London Sadiq Khan and Housing Justice CEO Kathy Mohan OBE holding the Charter.

Launch of Refugee Lodgings Programme

Research by London Councils shows that the number of refugees and asylum seekers presenting as homeless in London rose by 39% in October, with 846 people left without a home after they were evicted from their Home Office accommodation. Many of these people were given only a few days notice to leave and have no choice but to sleep on the streets.

In order to try and address this, we launched a Refugee Lodgings Programme

in December whereby individuals leaving Home Office accommodation having been granted Refugee Status, can rent a room in a resident landlord's home (become a lodger) for six months while they find permanent accommodation, a job, and adapt to life in the UK.

Our team will support both the resident landlord and lodger during the process (which provides an income for the resident landlord), and a safety net from homelessness and rough sleeping for the lodger.

You can find out further information about our Refugee Lodgings Programme and how to become a resident landlord [here](#).

We are recruiting for a new Lodgings Officer to join our team, and to help drive and support this new scheme – if you or anyone in your networks are interested in finding out more about this role, please click [here](#).

The Citadel Project

Our Citadel teams in Swansea, Neath Port Talbot and Wrexham were hard at work in the run up to Christmas helping those we support to move into their new homes, as well as organising Christmas parties for volunteers and those we support.

In Wrexham, staff and volunteers joined supported people for a delicious Christmas dinner and a quiz; and the Swansea and Neath Port Talbot groups came together for Christmas dinner and carol singing. Parcels of toiletries and essentials were gifted to those we support, and our volunteers received a range of goodies to thank them for their continued support and commitment to the Citadel Project. Much fun was had by all!

Nigel and Stacey were also delighted and grateful to be presented with a donation of £6,587.18 raised by Co-op members at the Co-op Community Cheque celebration event. This will help to fund decorating and furnishing the homes that those we support move into if they are unable to do so themselves.



Hosting in London

Our London hosting team has been busy assessing and welcoming six new host households and seven new guests to the Project since September. Given how quickly the Project is growing, we are now recruiting for a new Hosting Officer to join the team – if you or anyone in your networks may be interested in applying for this role, you can find out more [here](#).

We are delighted that two of our guests have been granted their leave to remain in the UK following a long and arduous process; another is now volunteering for a refugee charity; and we have supported three guests to access refurbished laptops.

The team organised a fantastic Christmas celebration for our guests at Hyde Park's Winter Wonderland, as well as a get-together for hosts, and a Christmas party (with gifts!). Everyone had a lovely time celebrating together.



Hosting in Wales

We have been in touch with hosts who are currently on a break from hosting to identify if they are able to accommodate guests for a short period of time in an emergency situation and two host households have kindly offered to be available – thank you very much indeed to them.

We are also pleased to report that we have set up one new hosting placement; three guests celebrated Christmas with their host families; and we are celebrating one host household approaching their two-year hosting anniversary with HJC, and another their one-year anniversary. We are very grateful for all that you do!

We have been effectively working with Local Authorities and partner organisations to resolve a number of particularly complex cases. Multi-agency working and collaborative communication has led to positive outcomes for all those involved.

Re-settling in a Nation of Sanctuary

We were delighted to find a suitable private rental property for a family of three that we have been working with for the last few months. They had been living with a host in Swansea and moved into their new home at the beginning of December in time for Christmas.

Two Welcome Centres for refugees arriving in Wales closed at the end of November and the team has been busy supporting individuals to move on into other accommodation, including some challenging cases where individuals have refused all offers of accommodation and have been required to declare as homeless.

Faith in Affordable Housing (FiAH)

In November, our Faith in Affordable Housing Wales and England officers, Bex and Beki, met in Northop, North Wales, to visit an inspiring new affordable housing development that was facilitated by Housing Justice Cymru through our Housing Association Framework.

The six new social rented homes have been developed by Wales and West Housing Association on land sold to them at a discount by the United Reformed Church (National Synod of Wales). The homes are built to Passivhaus standards. Passivhaus is seen as the gold standard of energy efficiency in house building - as well as significantly reduced energy bills and minimal carbon emissions, residents also experience cleaner air in their homes leading to a range of physical and mental health benefits.

Whilst walking around the beautiful village, Beki met with members of the local community who expressed their appreciation for the considerate way the development had been handled by Wales and West Housing Association, and the appearance of the homes which they thought was in keeping with their surroundings. They also commented that the tenants are already very much part of their community.

The URC in Wales has completed a number of schemes with Housing Justice Cymru and has a policy for affordable housing development ([see here](#)).

Our Faith in Affordable Housing England Team is working with Mission and Discipleship representatives of the URC to explore opportunities for expanding this approach in England, and are exploring a number of pilot sites.



In December, we were pleased to be invited to talk about our Faith in Affordable Housing Project at Albany Baptist Church on ITV News – you can watch the interview with our Director for Wales, Bonnie Williams, [here](#).

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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