



CARITAS  
ANCHOR  
HOUSE



# Our Impact 2019/20





“ Well, what a year. The 12 months to 31st March 2020 were great for Caritas Anchor House, and we’re very proud that we supported more people on their journeys out of homelessness than ever before.

“ Our team of dedicated and talented staff have continued to put residents at the heart of all decisions, and worked with them to ensure they can start their new beginnings.”



We continue to deliver an excellent and impactful service, and have strengthened our relationships with the local authority and partners to ensure the best possible outcomes for those who need our support.

We were recognised as the “Institution of the Year” at the East London Citizens UK Awards, for building a powerful team of residents to win commitment to work with a social housing provider for a new development. We were also finalists for a number of accolades, including “Homelessness Project of the Year” at the UK Housing Awards.

We were pleased to open newly refurbished spaces to make our residents stay at Caritas Anchor House more comfortable, and to support them to live independently. We were also pleased to host visits to the service by our Mayor Rokhsana Fiaz and the Robert Jenrick, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government.

The context in which we work has become ever more challenging over the last few years. Homelessness continues to rise in the London Borough of Newham, where 1 in every 24 people do not have a place to call home - the highest in the country. That figure alone highlights why our work is so important, and it wouldn’t be possible without your support.

As we begin 2020/21, we know it’s going to be yet another extraordinary year - but for very different reasons. The global Covid-19 pandemic has and will continue to have a huge impact, but we know that we have great foundations in place and fantastic supporters which will enable us to ride the storm.

On behalf of all of the residents, staff and Board here, I’d like to say a huge thank you for your support. We really couldn’t do it without you.

**Amanda Dubarry**  
Chief Executive



# 287

people had a place to call home at  
Caritas Anchor House

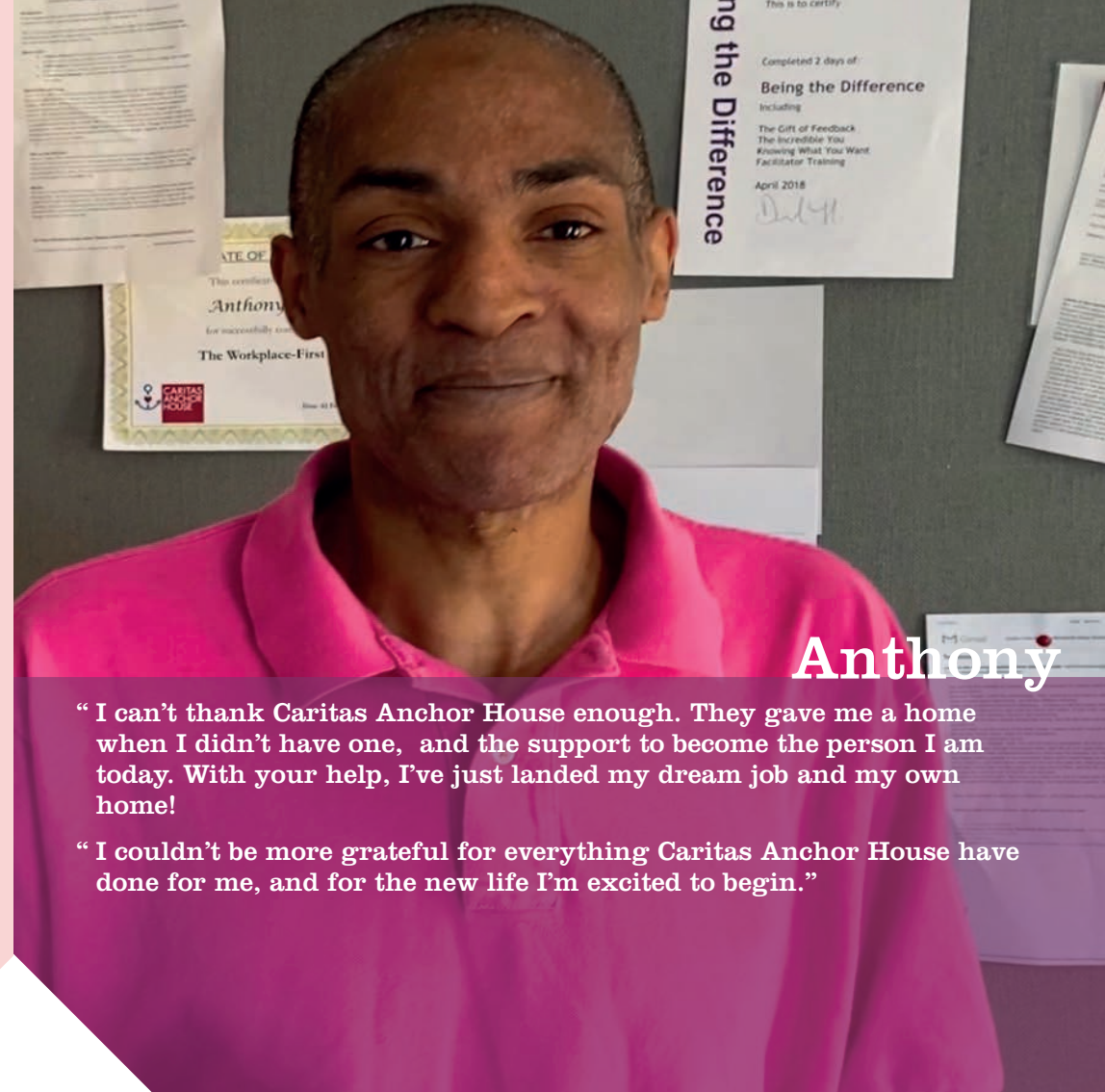
Throughout the year, we provided a home and support to  
287 people who were experiencing homelessness –  
more than ever before.

During their stays, we worked with residents to address the causes of their homelessness and any barriers they were leaving homelessness behind and building their new beginnings.

The most common cause of homelessness for our residents was the breakdown of a relationship with a loved one, family or friends (38%).



Even though we worked with so many people, there was a further 30% of referrals to our service that we were not able to accept due to capacity, demonstrating the increasing need for our services.



Anthony

“I can’t thank Caritas Anchor House enough. They gave me a home when I didn’t have one, and the support to become the person I am today. With your help, I’ve just landed my dream job and my own home!”

“I couldn’t be more grateful for everything Caritas Anchor House have done for me, and for the new life I’m excited to begin.”



Nikhil

“ I was attacked four times when I was living on the streets. I was too scared to sleep, developed problems with drinking, and lost my job. Now, my life couldn’t be more different. I feel confident and I’ve stopped drinking.

“ I have structure to my life, access to advice and encouragement, and the atmosphere is friendly and supportive. Caritas Anchor House made it possible for me to get my life back. I am so happy, and feel positive about the future.”

# 82%

of people reported improved wellbeing

**We provided one-to-one support and facilitated peer-led and group activities to promote healthy physical, emotional and mental wellbeing to all residents, 55% of reported mental health issues that impacted on their daily lives.**

Despite being funded as a low-support service, we worked with 192 residents who reported multiple supported needs relating to mental health, substance abuse, domestic abuse, physical health and criminal justice.

We ran awareness and wellbeing sessions; focusing on improving confidence and self-care, managing stress and anxiety, keeping physically

fit and eating healthily. We also work with partners so that residents can access specialist and health services.

It’s important to offer residents an opportunity to take a step back from their day-to-day lives, which can sometimes be quite chaotic. Many are juggling moving on from homelessness while focusing on areas such as improving skills and securing employment.



# 422

attendances at education and  
employment related activities

During their stay, many residents engage in our education  
and training programme.

Building upon and learning new skills helps to improve self-esteem and gain experience to support career ambitions. We work with residents to explore their motivations, strengths and goals, and champion their steps towards skill development.

We have a range of activities - led by staff and partners - including IT training and e-learning, numeracy, literacy and language support, community organising and sessions on key life skills such as financial management and cooking.



**Thao**

“I really enjoy cooking, and Caritas Anchor House helped me get onto a six-week cooking course with top chefs. It was great, I learnt so many new recipes and techniques and can now make restaurant-quality food.

“I even got a work placement in a professional kitchen in a luxury hotel, and after the course, worked with staff at Caritas Anchor House to teach other residents some new skills too. It's inspired me to want to work in a kitchen and I'm now looking for assistant chef jobs.”



A portrait of a smiling Black man with short dreadlocks, wearing a dark blue button-down shirt with a small white dot pattern. He is resting his chin on his right hand.

James

“ Caritas Anchor House supported me to sort out my finances, to build confidence and new skills, and prepare to get back into work. I got involved in projects where I had responsibility and accountability, and even simple things like having to turn up on time.

“ My lived experience of homelessness and my time at Caritas Anchor House really helped me to secure my dream role with the council, supporting people experiencing and at risk of homelessness.

“ Through my own experiences and how I saw those around me be supported, I feel confident in my ability to help others in a similar situation.”

# 81

residents supported in jobs

28% of residents held a job in the year, and  
15% secured a new role.

Of those, 44% were in full-time roles, 33% in part-time and 23% on zero-hour contracts. By comparison, research shows that across the UK, an average 7% of people living in supported housing are in paid employment.

Employment is a key goal for many of our residents, so we help residents to secure and keep jobs.

This includes work with partners to offer mentoring, supported job searches, CV development workshops, mock interviews and access to suitable clothing. In addition, 97 residents attended education sessions to learn new skills.



# 103

people moved into new homes

The main aim for all residents is to move on from Caritas Anchor House into a place they can call home, and hold onto it.

That's why we build partnerships with the local authority, housing associations and landlords; deliver tenancy sustainment training and continue to support residents once they move on.

such as secured employment or are facing any challenges that we can support with.

We make sure residents know they can contact us if we're needed.

Our transitional support includes setting up household bills, keeping in touch to see if residents have any news

On average, residents stayed at Caritas Anchor House for 14 months.



Susan

“ I worked full-time for the NHS for many years, but lost my home when my landlord sold the property with very little notice. I was begging people for a place to stay. I'm so thankful Caritas Anchor House - it is exactly what I needed. after all I'd been through in my year of homelessness. They did so much for me, including helping prepare me for moving into my new home, sort out my tenancy and set up bills.

“ I'm so happy to have somewhere to call home, and want to help other people who are experiencing homelessness so that they can have the same chance as me.”



## Ruslans

“ I was working on building sites, and lost my job when I developed epilepsy and had a seizure at work. I ended up losing my home, and for five years I slept in parks, in bin sheds or shopping centres, until I was found by outreach workers.

“ I didn't know that places like Caritas Anchor House existed, and that people wanted to help me - but I'm so glad they do. I had a safe roof over my head, food, and my key worker has given me so much support including replacing my stolen ID, so that I could take on a new tenancy.

“ Before I felt lost and dehumanised. But now, thanks to Caritas Anchor House I've also been able to move out in to my own home - and it couldn't feel better.”

# 100%

of new tenancies sustained

Our Assessment Hub was launched in December 2018, so has now been running for over a year.

The hub provides a lifeline to those who are, quite literally, risking their lives on the streets and offers short-term licenses to enable residents to move into sustainable long-term accommodation.

The hub housed and supported 99 residents in 2019/20, and 41 moved out onto long-term accommodation.

We're extremely proud that 100% successfully sustained their new tenancies. In addition, 89% said they felt more confident to live independently as a result of our support.

Due to its success, the hub capacity increased from 10 to 35 bed spaces in the year.





# 475

hours of volunteering undertaken  
by 68 people

**Volunteering supports people to develop their skills, explore interests and contribute to their community.**

Our volunteering programme plays a key role in supporting residents to gain practical learning and development opportunities, and we also encourage supporters to support volunteer with us.

The ways in which residents and supporters can volunteer is wide ranging, and includes but is not limited

to leading sessions on CV development, interview skills and mindfulness, as well as support with food donations and events.

Whether it's hours, days or months, time spent volunteering really does make a difference – to our residents, charity and volunteers themselves.



**Alaa**

“Volunteering has completely changed me. To be part of an organisation that offers help to those who are homeless is the most rewarding and valuable work you can do.

“I had an opportunity to lead on mindfulness and relaxation sessions, as part of the wellbeing programme. I learnt something new every day, and it opened my eyes to the strength we can have to overcome adversity.

“You’ll get more out of volunteering than you put in, so I’d advise anyone thinking about it to take the leap – it will be worth it.”



Carl

“ We welcome new developments in our community, helping to solve the housing crisis so many of us are facing.

“ All we are asking for is genuinely affordable housing, with a little compassion, empathy and understanding. Charity begins at home, and Newham is exactly that – our home.”

# Recognition

of residents' campaign for change

Last year, residents launched a project to have their voices heard on the housing crisis which is directly affecting them and thousands of others.



The housing situation in Newham includes rising levels of homelessness, rocketing rents and a lack of affording housing options, and is a topic on which each of our residents are experts by experience.

This project saw residents advocate for change to address the issues both locally and nationally, including meeting local and central government representatives to discuss plans for affordable housing and approaches to local developments.

It shed light on the experiences of those desperately in need of affordable accommodation, and the challenges they face – including the procedures to bid for housing – and resulted in residents winning the 'Institute of the Year 2020' award from Citizens UK.

We are stronger together, and we look forward to continuing to build on this momentum and further amplify the voice of our residents and local community to create the changes that are so needed.



“Having a IT suite will make it so much easier for me to use the computers without distraction, for things like job searches and my college study.”

“I really enjoy cooking for myself and others, and the new kitchen is really nice and will help us to eat healthily and build friendships with other residents over food.”



# 4

## building projects completed

**During the year we completed four significant building projects, to improve our facilities and prepare residents for independence as they move on from homelessness.**



Over many years, thousands of people have used the spaces at Caritas Anchor House, and they had understandably seen better days.

We listened to resident's ideas and top priorities, and worked with supporters and partners to turn them into reality.

The top priority was a resident's kitchen, to store and prepare meals which we built which we built and opened in the summer. We also introduced cooking classes, where residents learnt about healthy eating and how to prepare meals on a budget.

We also built a new resident's laundry, which was the second highest priority, and developed an e-learning and IT suite so that residents could access the internet independently and with staff support for key activities such as learning, job and housing searches, and keeping connected with loved ones.

In addition, we refurbished our large communal lounge. This space sits at the heart of our building and the transformation has had an enormous effect on individual wellbeing and the feeling of pride residents have in their home.



# Thank you

**We're incredibly grateful for the support of countless people, community groups, companies and trusts who have supported our work.**

Your help over the past year has helped 287 people on their journeys out of homelessness. If you donated, fundraised or worked in partnership with us, thank you.

For every £1, we spent 77p on delivering services to change the lives of people experiencing homelessness. Full accounts available at [www.caritasanchorhouse.org.uk](http://www.caritasanchorhouse.org.uk)



**Donate**



**Volunteer**

## **But there is more to be done**

Thanks to you we've had a fantastic year, but as homelessness increases, there is much more to be done.

If you'd like to get involved, get in touch!



**Partner**



**Fundraise**

[www.caritasanchorhouse.org.uk](http://www.caritasanchorhouse.org.uk)  
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