



CARITAS
ANCHOR
HOUSE

working at
the heart of
homelessness

“making it work”

2020/21

our impact



Cilla

“I now have a safe place”

Our mission is to build hope, enable lasting change and end homelessness for people in East London.

We are here to help people in our local community to build their new beginnings. We do this by:

- **Providing a safe place** - to make sure that people experiencing homelessness have somewhere safe to stay as they begin to rebuild their lives
- **Offering support** - to encourage and enable people to build a better future for themselves, through the provision of personalised support, educational and life skills opportunities
- **Building resilience** - to build networks of support, and empower people to navigate services with confidence and be a proactive member of their community outside of and beyond life at Caritas Anchor House.

Well, what a year

I'm sure you'll agree the last 12 months were not what we were expecting when we looked ahead just over a year ago.

As a relatively small charity, we didn't quite know what the impact of the pandemic would be, but I'm very pleased to say, we're still standing. I'd go so far as to say we, and those who call Caritas Anchor House home, are thriving.

Thanks to the generosity of so many of **our wonderful supporters** we've weathered this storm, and ensured that those who come to us for help were kept safe and continued their journeys away from homelessness. We're chuffed to have been **able to help 278 people**, and had a positive impact on their lives, despite all the challenges Covid-19 has thrown our way.

Of course we couldn't have done it without our wonderful team, and I'm extremely proud of how adaptable and resilient they have been. We had to change how we work and deliver services, but have continued to provide much-needed support to people who found themselves without a place to call home.

As things start to settle down, we're looking forward to safely opening up more of our in-person support and activities, and having an impact on more people than ever before.

On behalf of the residents, the team and the trustees, thank you. **Thank you for continuing to support those without a home** to get to a better place, and for helping us to keep so many people safe over the last year. We couldn't have done it without you.

Amanda Dubarry
Chief Executive



**“having an impact
on more people
than ever before”**

“focusing
on brighter days
ahead”

“““

I came here when a relationship breakdown left me homeless. They've been very supportive, calling me on the telephone regularly to make sure I'm okay and if there is anything I need help with.

The pandemic has had a big impact, but Caritas Anchor House has made it easier, in the sense that, I have a safe place that I can be, get the help that I need and focus on brighter days ahead.

As COVID-19 hit and the country went into lockdown, we really had to adapt how we did things.

Our work was and is as important as ever. It was essential that we carried on providing a home and support to those who really need it, but we had to start working differently. The health and wellbeing of the Caritas Anchor House community has always been our priority, and this has not changed. People who have experienced homelessness are three times more likely to experience a chronic health condition, which means many of our residents are much more vulnerable to getting ill as a result of coronavirus.

As much as possible, we paused vital in-person support and went virtual. We had to close the much-loved communal areas of the building, implement an enhanced cleaning regime and place limits on facilities such as the residents' kitchen and laundry.

Newham, where we are based, had the highest death rate in the country for quite some time - but because of these measures, not one single resident (of the 278 we supported) tested positive for COVID-19.

0

residents tested positive
for Covid-19

278

people supported by home and support

As everyone across the country was urged to 'stay home, stay safe' we campaigned with others to urge the government to implement urgent measures to protect people experiencing homelessness and sleeping on the streets. The London Borough of Newham, where we are based, has the highest levels of homelessness in the country and so nowhere was urgent action more needed.

The government introduced the 'Everyone In' scheme, which supported people who were sleeping rough into hotels that had to close due to the restrictions. Thousands of people across the UK were supported by this scheme, and we were pleased to have played a part.

We increased the capacity of our Assessment Hub from 20 to 39 throughout the pandemic and until the end of March. As and when spaces became available at Caritas Anchor House, we welcomed people in from hotels. People like Anne, who was living in London and working as a waitress in a five-star hotel when without any notice, her landlord sold her home.

141

new residents moved in during the year

“““

I went from living a normal life with a job I loved, to having nothing – almost overnight. I had nowhere to go and no choice but to sleep on the streets. It was so scary. I slept rough for three months before being put up in a hotel during the lockdown.”

Now, I'm so happy to have a room of my own at Caritas Anchor House. I've been here for a few weeks now, and it feels like a big family. I have a bedroom, a bathroom, access to food and a kitchen. But most importantly, there are people here that are supporting me.

45%

became homeless due to family or friends no longer able to accommodate them – often due to overcrowding and concerns about COVID-19

* Name and picture have been changed

Anne

“people here are supporting me”

Peter

*Name and picture have been changed

“putting my life back together”

“““

It's impossible to get your life sorted. I couldn't get a bank account, or a job, or a home. What are you meant to do? I had no choice but to sleep on the floor with 22 others as part of a labouring job working over 12 hours a day unpaid. Now I realise it was slavery. It was unspeakable, so I left, and now I fear for my life.

I've been at Caritas Anchor House for three months now, and they are helping me to put my life back together.

Without somewhere safe to stay like this, I don't know what would have happened to me.

11%

of those we supported did not have access to government support

Covid-19 shone a brighter light on the injustices that many migrants face.

Many members of our communities are unable to access government help because of where they were born, and the immigration papers they have. This is because of a government policy called No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) that denies people living and working in the UK crucial forms of support from the government.

Without assistance like Universal Credit and housing benefit, thousands of people are left without a safety net.

The government instructed local authorities to house all people sleeping rough, regardless of immigration status, for the duration of the Covid-19 lockdown. But as restrictions were eased, we done everything we could to make sure that people weren't left with no choice but to go back to the streets.

30

people were supported with no recourse to public funds.

Sadly, many of our residents have experienced feelings of despair, hopelessness and panic during their homelessness journey. But, the added uncertainty of a pandemic can easily set somebody back. That's why our team worked diligently to ensure our service remains safe, effective and continues to be a home for our residents.

We adapted our wellbeing package, responding to the needs and concerns of residents. Most of our in-person workshops and activities had to stop, but we kept in regular contact with residents by phone and video, and offered enhanced emotional support from a reasonable distance to make sure that all residents knew that we were still here for them. We carried out comprehensive consultations to support residents to remain healthy, maintain a consistent level of exercise, and to manage any underlying health conditions.

As other services were forced to closed, this part of our work was even more important. Attending appointments elsewhere relating to health, substance misuse and benefits stopped, and barriers around language and digital skills made this even more difficult, causing stress and anxiety for many.

130

residents reported mental health issues that impact on daily life

“““

When I lost my partner to cancer, my world collapsed and I ended up on the streets. I also suffer from PTSD and was having flashbacks to childhood abuse. I was a lost soul, and had had enough of life.

My keyworker regularly keeps in touch to see how I am and if I need any help. My outlook has changed completely and it has saved my life without a shadow of a doubt.

I feel like there is hope; a chance that I can rebuild my position in society.

216

attendances at healthcare activities, including vaccinations, testing and screenings

Richard

“it saved my life”



Adam

“I am really hopeful”

“““

When I lost my job I ended up losing my home, but was too proud and afraid to ask for help. But I knew something had to change.

Caritas Anchor House changed my life. I've been able to focus on myself and where I want to get to during lockdown, and I've been volunteering to keep busy.

I'm about to start voluntary work with a charity and I'm also signing up for agency jobs back in the hospitality industry, perhaps in kitchens or front-of-house again. I am feeling really very positive about moving on and what happens next for me.

86

attendances at work-readiness sessions, such as CV and interview-skills workshops

One way in which the pandemic impacted our resident group was through job losses as a result of the lockdown and closed businesses.

Many of those who lost jobs or were put on furlough were working in construction, warehouses, security, retail and hospitality. Residents were concerned about the impact this would have on them financially, and were supported by our team who offered budgeting advice, and to make Universal Credit claims where they did not meet the requirements for government financial support for employees, often due to their employment start date.

As we navigated this unprecedented time together, we did not always have the answers – such as when the restrictions would come to an end - but we did all we could to reassure residents that we are here to support them.

We also continued to work with residents to secure new jobs, offering support to reach their employment goals. This includes discussing their interests and skills, accessing relevant training, developing CVs, building confidence around interviews, and applying for roles. Ultimately, this will enable residents to secure an income, maintain a tenancy and leave homelessness behind.

49

residents were in employment in the year (17.6%)

Our ultimate goal for all residents that move into Caritas Anchor House is that they go on to move into their own homes.

Sadly, the pandemic brought the housing market – including viewings and new lettings - to a halt. That meant that for a part of the year, we were unable to support residents to move on into their own homes when they were ready to do so.

We continued to build relationships with the local authority, supported and privately rented accommodation providers so that residents could secure somewhere to live as soon as restrictions would allow it.

We also provided tenancy sustainment training, and helped residents to gain life skills that help to ensure they can sustain their new tenancies. We help with the practicalities of moving too – going to viewings, and transporting a residents' belongings into their new home.

Once moved on, we continue to support residents for a further six months as they start their next chapters.

137

people were supported to move on from Caritas Anchor House

“““

I lost my home when I developed a spinal condition, which meant I couldn't continue my role as a care worker. My key worker at Caritas Anchor House is absolutely brilliant and supported me so much. There's always support if you need it.

I moved into my own home a month ago, and I absolutely love it! I'm starting to make it look like my own, with all my personal touches. I can't wait to show my son.

I turned 60 recently, and my new home is the best birthday present I could have wished for.

95

(70%) moved in to homes of their own home

42

moved into short-term accommodation, such as support services, dependent on their needs



“the best birthday present.”

Tuesday



We couldn't have got through this year without the generous help of our wonderful supporters.

We're so grateful to everyone who continued to think of and support others despite experiencing unsettling times themselves. Many of our usual fundraising opportunities were cancelled due to the government restrictions, but our supporters helped us to get through this challenging time.

Thanks to you, we were able to support residents to stay home and stay safe, and particularly those who were shielding or self-isolating, by providing donations of food, hand sanitizers, face masks and other essential items.

Your help over the past year has helped 278 people on their journeys out of homelessness. If you donated, fundraised or worked in partnership with us, thank you.

“““

We didn't quite realise how impressed we'd be by the facilities at Caritas Anchor House. It was a real privilege to support them with their plans to create their very first food store. It was a truly rewarding experience for us. We wouldn't hesitate to return!

Volunteer group who helped to set up our food bank for residents

How you responded

15,000

meals were donated for our 278 residents throughout the year

We wouldn't have been able to achieve all we have over the last year, or turn our future goals into realities, without your generous support. So thank you so very much.

In the year ahead, we are pleased to be building additional accommodation on our site, which has been a goal of ours for a long time (see right). This will bring our capacity up to 155, and mean we can support more people than ever before to move on from homelessness.

With unemployment on the rise and rough sleeping in the borough of Newham at an all-time high, this development could not have come at a more important time. We're also looking forward to continuing to collaborate with partners to ensure that those who come to us for help have access to the best possible support, and we have exciting plans to deliver services at other sites in the borough too.

Thank you to everyone involved in helping to make such a difference to so many people's lives, in the midst of a housing crisis and global pandemic. We couldn't do it without you.

What next - plans for the future

“““

These plans mean that, each year, we will be able to help even more people to move on from homelessness for good. The thoughtful design of the project will ensure that residents have a safe home which they can feel proud of and the support they need on their journey out of homelessness.

With rough sleeping and homelessness in Newham increasing we cannot open these units soon enough.

Amanda Dubarry,
Chief Executive



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 278 people on their journeys out of homelessness. If you donated, fundraised, volunteered 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.

Thank you



Volunteer



Donate



Partner



Fundraise

But there is more to be done

Thanks to you we've made a huge difference to people's lives, but as homelessness continues to increase, there is so much more to be done.

If you'd like to support or partner with us, we would love to hear from you!

fundraising@caritasanchorhouse.org.uk

More information and full accounts available at
www.caritasanchorhouse.org.uk

In such a challenging year, our people have shown an incredible resilience, adapted to ever-changing environments and worked so hard to keep each other safe. Thank you.

Contact us

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