

your **PLACE**
Solving homelessness
one person at a time

**OUR
IMPACT
2022/23**



BUILDING HOPE

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

We work closely with each person who comes through our doors, guiding them to meet their own needs through one-to-one and peer-led support.

With specialist teams and a compassionate community around them, residents make their own journey to independent living - and to a better place.

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 Your Place.





HUGE CHANGES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

**AT YOUR PLACE, IT IS OUR MISSION TO SOLVE HOMELESSNESS, ONE PERSON AT A TIME.
AND IN DOING THAT, LAST YEAR WE PROVIDED 404 PEOPLE WITH A SAFE PLACE TO CALL HOME.**

The 12 months to 31st March 2023 has seen some huge changes and achievements. Most noticeably has been our transformation from Caritas Anchor House to Your Place. As a result of this coproduced and successful evolution, each person who comes through our doors knows we are here for them. It is their place to feel safe, to start again.

Each person who finds sanctuary with us receives one-to-one and peer-led support, empowering them to meet their unique needs. More than just a place to live, we provide life-changing support to help people build their self-belief, confidence, and place in the community. We're a compassionate community that supports a person's journey to a better place. At our core are our values of compassion, inclusion, growth, and collaboration, which guide our interactions and decisions at every level.

It has been a year of collaboration, as we have worked with the local authority, service delivery partners, outreach services, health and training providers and supporters to develop and deliver services and ensure the support available for people experiencing homelessness is as impactful as it can be.

While so much is going well, we're facing huge challenges. More people than ever losing their homes. Newham continues to have the highest levels of homelessness in the country. And we're concerned about the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on our ability to deliver services, while increasingly more people are unable to afford to stay in their homes. But we are determined to continue to make a difference to the lives of those who need it, and thank you for your support.

WE CAN'T END HOMELESSNESS FOR EVERYONE OVERNIGHT, BUT TOGETHER, WE CAN HELP TO SOLVE IT ONE PERSON AT A TIME.

Amanda Dubarry
Chief Executive

MARIA

I WORKED MULTIPLE JOBS, COMPLETED COLLEGE COURSES AND STARTED A DEGREE. BUT THINGS STARTED TO GO DOWNHILL.

I FOUND MYSELF NOT ENOUGH PAY TO COVER THE RENT. I HAD NOWHERE TO LIVE, AND I ALWAYS HAD TO CARRY A BAG WITH MY BELONGINGS, TRYING TO FIND SOMEWHERE TO SLEEP.

I MET SOMEONE, THINGS SETTLED DOWN AND WE HAD A DAUGHTER TOGETHER. BUT WHEN WE SPLIT UP, THE HOUSE WAS REPOSSESSED. I LOST EVERYTHING, INCLUDING MY DAUGHTER. SHE WAS JUST SIX YEARS OLD AND I COULDN'T SUPPORT HER NOT KNOWING WHERE WE'D WAKE UP THE NEXT DAY. IT WAS SO HARD, BUT I KNOW SHE IS SAFE. BUT THE SADNESS MADE MY PROBLEMS WORSE.

WHEN I WAS ROUGH SLEEPING, AN OUTREACH TEAM REFERRED ME TO YOUR PLACE. I LOVE MY NEW HOME. ROSEANN, MY KEYWORKER, IS EXTREMELY SUPPORTIVE AND EASY TO TALK TO, AND DOESN'T MAKE ME FEEL CONSCIOUS ABOUT THE PERSON I AM OR WHAT I HAVE EXPERIENCED. SHE HELPS ME WITH THE THINGS I STRUGGLE WITH, LIKE PAPERWORK AND BUDGETING, AND SHE HAS HELPED WITH MY MENTAL HEALTH TOO.

I'VE BEEN GOING TO THE WOMEN'S SESSIONS HERE AND DOING A LOT OF PAINTING. I FIND THAT IT REALLY HELPS ME TO RELAX AND COPE WITH THE STRESS OF EVERYTHING.

IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE I HAD A PLACE THAT I CAN ACTUALLY CALL HOME. WHEN I MOVE ON, IT'S GOING TO BE DAUNTING, BUT I KNOW I WILL STILL HAVE THE SUPPORT FROM YOUR PLACE.



**WHEN I MOVE ON, IT'S GOING
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FROM YOUR PLACE.**

RESPONDING TO NEED

We're stronger and can have a bigger impact when we work in partnerships and build alliances.

Last year, we compassionately supported 404 residents on their journeys away from homelessness. That's more people than we have supported ever before, a reflection of our growth and expanded services across the borough. 206 of those remained with us from the previous year, and 198 people moved in versus the 414 referrals that we received.

Newham continues to have the highest levels of homelessness in the country, with 1 in 21 people not having a place to call home. In response, we opened a new service – Hope Street – in March 2022, which provides an additional 15 bed spaces in an innovatively designed 'community' within our building. And we developed strengths-based and gender-informed services, specifically to support women who have experienced homelessness.

We also delivered personalised support in multiple services across the borough as part of a two-year contract from September 2021, working with the local authority and partners. This saw the number of people we support increase from 155 to over 200 each day.

Our work is never more needed, and as the cost-of-living leads to more people unable to afford high rents, the risk of people losing their homes is increasing.

The main cause of homelessness for our residents was their friends or family no longer able to accommodate them (19%), followed by the loss of their privately rented accommodation (11%). This is in part due to the increasing costs of living, including high rents and household bills.



404 PEOPLE WERE
SUPPORTED ON THEIR JOURNEYS
AWAY FROM HOMELESSNESS



YOUR PLACE STEPPED IN AND PROVIDED
ME WITH THE NECESSARY **SUPPORT** AND
CARE TO FOCUS ON MY
RECOVERY AND PLAN FOR THE FUTURE.

BORYS



I WAS WORKING IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY AND THINGS WERE GOING WELL. THEN I FELL DOWN THE STAIRS WHILE ON THE JOB AND BROKE MY LEG. IT WAS A SEVERE INJURY THAT LEFT ME UNABLE TO WORK AND STRUGGLING TO PAY MY BILLS.

MY LANDLORD DEMANDED RENT, AND I HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO LEAVE AND ENDED UP ON THE STREETS. I WAS HOMELESS FOR OVER A YEAR, STRUGGLING TO MOVE AND RELYING ON A ZIMMER FRAME TO GET AROUND. LIFE ON THE STREETS WAS HARSH. I WAS TIRED OF THE CONSTANT DANGER AND UNCERTAINTY. BUT ONE DAY, I WAS OFFERED A SPACE AT YOUR PLACE.

THE PEOPLE AT YOUR PLACE TREATED ME WITH RESPECT AND KINDNESS. I WAS GRATEFUL FOR THE SUPPORT AND FELT AMAZING TO BE IN A SAFE AND COMFORTABLE ENVIRONMENT. I'M JUST A NORMAL PERSON WHO FELL ON HARD TIMES.

DESPITE HAVING MANAGED A TEAM OF 50 IN CONSTRUCTION, MY DREAMS OF STARTING MY OWN BUILDING COMPANY WERE PUT ON HOLD AFTER THE INJURY. MY EAGERNESS TO RETURN TO WORK AND REGAIN MY INDEPENDENCE WAS HINDERED BY MY CONDITION.

HOWEVER, YOUR PLACE STEPPED IN AND PROVIDED ME WITH THE NECESSARY SUPPORT AND CARE TO FOCUS ON MY RECOVERY AND PLAN FOR THE FUTURE. WITH THEIR HELP, I REGAINED HOPE AND A DETERMINATION TO OVERCOME MY OBSTACLES. I WILL BE ETERNALLY GRATEFUL TO THE KIND-HEARTED INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANISATIONS THAT SUPPORTED ME DURING MY DARKEST DAYS

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

We care about people, value their views and experiences and put them at the heart of all we do.

Not having safe and secure housing can contribute to poor physical and mental health, and it can also be difficult to register and access services without an address or the means to make or attend appointments.

That's why when people come to Your Place, support to improve health and wellbeing and feel confident engaging with services is such an important part of our offering.

Of the people we work with, 52% report physical health and mental health issues that affect their daily life. 48% of the women we worked with had experienced domestic abuse.

We collaborated with organisations including the NHS to deliver support and advice, and regular on-site sessions and screenings. This includes stop smoking and sexual health clinics, alcohol and drug use support, vaccinations for Covid-19 and pneumonia, flu jabs, TB screening, fibro scans to assess the health of the liver, Hep B and C testing, as well as visits by dentists and GPs.

We also supported residents with appointments and advocacy and access to counselling, and worked with them to design and deliver peer-led sessions on topics that are important to them. Over the last year, these sessions included coping with stress and anxiety, understanding mindfulness, assertiveness and boundary setting, and non-drinking in social situations. We also run sessions such as yoga, guided painting and social activities such as coffee mornings, recognising residents' need to build connections and be an active participant in our community.



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WE WORKED WITH HAD EXPERIENCED DOMESTIC
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HALIMA

I WAS LIVING WITH MY AUNT AND COUSIN WHEN EVERYTHING CHANGED. I WAS KICKED OUT WITH NO NOTICE AND NOWHERE TO GO. I FELT LOST AND SCARED, I HAD NO ONE TO TURN TO.

I WAS SLEEPING ON A BENCH, BUT THE THOUGHT OF HAVING A SAFE AND SECURE PLACE TO STAY GAVE ME HOPE. AFTER A FEW WEEKS, I WAS PICKED UP BY AN OUTREACH TEAM WHO PUT ME IN A HOTEL FOR FOUR DAYS. THAT'S WHEN SHANNON, ONE OF THE STAFF MEMBERS FROM YOUR PLACE, CONTACTED ME AND TOLD ME THERE WAS SPACE FOR ME THERE.

WHEN I ARRIVED AT YOUR PLACE, I WAS WELCOMED WITH OPEN ARMS BY THE STAFF AND OTHER RESIDENTS. WHENEVER I HAVE A PROBLEM, I KNOW I CAN TURN TO MY KEYWORKER, JACKIE, WHO HAS BEEN A GREAT SUPPORT TO ME.

I MET NEW PEOPLE AND EVEN STARTED A BAKERY COURSE WITH THE HELP OF THE JOB COACH. COOKING IS MY PASSION; I LOVE NOTHING MORE THAN CREATING DELICIOUS TREATS IN THE KITCHEN. AFTER I FINISH MY COURSE, I HOPE TO START MY OWN BAKERY BUSINESS. I'VE NEVER HAD FRIENDS BEFORE, BUT AT YOUR PLACE, I'VE MADE NEW ONES. I EVEN ATTEND THE WOMEN'S GROUP ON THURSDAYS, WHERE I'VE MET OTHER WOMEN WHO SHARE SIMILAR EXPERIENCES TO MINE.

YOUR PLACE IS MORE THAN JUST A ROOF OVER MY HEAD; IT'S A COMMUNITY THAT HAS GIVEN ME HOPE, SUPPORT, AND A CHANCE TO START A NEW CHAPTER IN MY LIFE.





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EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

We support people to breakthrough barriers and fulfil their hopes and potential.

Our strengths-based practise, offering guidance on what each individual identifies as a need, has seen positive results. Our focus on achieving education, employment and move-on goals is a vital part of that – moving away from homelessness for good isn't just about having a roof over your head. For so many it's about gaining life skills, exploring career options and sustaining employment which make sustaining tenancies possible.

Our person-centred support is tailored to individuals around basic needs, life skills, housing, health and wellbeing, and importantly, training, employment, move-on and sustaining long-term tenancies. Residents work with our job coach on personal training needs analyses, CV and interview support, and can access varied courses including CSCS and ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages), digital skills and our IT suite.

Residents can also participate in community engagement and volunteering opportunities to build or expand upon interests, activities and knowledge. These services have been essential in helping residents to secure and sustain jobs. In fact, 20% are in employment, significantly higher than the homelessness sector average of 10%. **We're delighted that this work was recognised and won the UK Housing Awards 2022, in the category of 'Resident Employment and Training'.**



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FOR THE FIRST TIME,
**MY DREAMS SEEM TO BE
ACHIEVABLE.** I FEEL EMPOWERED,
INDEPENDENT AND SUCCESSFUL



DANLEY

I BECAME HOMELESS AFTER A RELATIONSHIP BREAKDOWN WITH MY PARTNER. I FOUND MYSELF SOFA SURFING, MOVING FROM ONE FRIEND TO ANOTHER. EVENTUALLY, I ENDED UP ROUGH SLEEPING.

WHEN I FIRST MOVED IN TO YOUR PLACE, I WAS NERVOUS AS THIS WAS A REALLY BIG CHANGE FOR ME. HOWEVER, I SOON SETTLED IN AND STARTED TO MAKE FRIENDS. I FELT VERY SAFE TO LIVE THERE AND WAS ABLE TO ACCESS SERVICES THEY PROVIDED. I PARTICIPATED IN A NUMBER OF EMPLOYABILITY AND LIFE SKILLS SESSIONS WHICH HELPED BOOST MY CONFIDENCE AND TAUGHT ME HOW TO BE INDEPENDENT. I ALSO DONE A ONE-WEEK COURSE FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE.

FOR THE FIRST TIME, MY DREAMS SEEM TO BE ACHIEVABLE. I FEEL EMPOWERED, INDEPENDENT AND SUCCESSFUL EVEN THOUGH I HAVE NOT REACHED WHERE I WANT TO BE YET.

I FINALLY FELT READY TO LIVE INDEPENDENTLY. STAFF WERE VERY SUPPORTIVE AND HELPED WITH THE APPLICATION PROCESS FOR MY NEW HOME, AND WAYS TO MANAGE MY FINANCES.

SINCE I MOVED INTO MY OWN PLACE, I'VE BEEN REALLY FOCUSING ON MY SELF-CARE AND SELF-DEVELOPMENT. I AM A BETTER VERSION OF MYSELF THAN BEFORE; I STOPPED HANGING OUT WITH WRONG CROWDS AND STOPPED FALLING INTO ANY BAD HABIT OR PROBLEMS.

YOUR PLACE HAS TAUGHT ME THAT MY PAST DOESN'T HAVE TO AFFECT MY FUTURE AND ANYTHING I PUT MY MIND TO I CAN ACHIEVE.

LEAVING HOMELESSNESS BEHIND

Supporting people to move on from homelessness and live independently is the reason we are here.

In the year, 115 people were supported to move on from our services and leave homelessness behind for good. The majority moved into long-term sheltered and supported housing and local authority properties.

Move-on into long-term accommodation continues to be one of our biggest challenges. There are simply not enough suitable, social or genuinely affordable homes for those that need them, and so many barriers to access. The ability to save and pay two months' advance rent and deposit for the private rented sector for people on their journeys away from homelessness is impossible for many.

Newham has also seen the highest rent rises in the capital over the last three years. Where we have had significant impact is sustained tenancies. 94% of those who moved on sustained their tenancies for at least nine months, at which point we stop monitoring. It's been found that if a person can sustain a tenancy for six months, they will be well-equipped to do so long-term, and so we continue to provide support during this transition period.

Residents are supported to understand vital tenancy management skills including housing options, rights and responsibilities, living on a budget, maintaining a property and landlord relationships. This is vital to ensure that residents do not return to homelessness and ensures our support has a lasting impact.

A man with sunglasses on his head, wearing a black Adidas jacket, is smiling and pointing towards the camera. The background is a blurred outdoor setting. At the bottom of the image, there is a colorful bar chart with several bars in shades of purple, blue, yellow, and red.

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**WE SEE DIFFERENCE AND
DIVERSITY AS POWER,
AND ARE HERE TO CELEBRATE
AND EMBRACE IT.**



CELEBRATING DIFFERENCES

We celebrate diversity, promote inclusivity and respect, and challenge inequality.

Too many people and communities are held back on the basis of their characteristics or life experiences. But we see difference and diversity as power, and are here to celebrate and embrace it.

We take positive steps to provide opportunities for people who are experiencing homelessness to have their voices heard on the issues affecting them, by influencing decision-makers and seeking input into our service provision. We're committed to ensuring that each person's support needs are met, and that homelessness is a person's housing status, and not their identity.

Collaboration is key, and a recent example of coproduction to design our services is the development of our Women's Development Strategy. We listened to our women about the differences in their experiences of homelessness and that the support they needed has to be trauma-informed, relationship-based and drawing upon their resilience.

But we couldn't develop our work in this area alone. Our strategy was co-produced with specialist services and partners that we work with, our frontline employees who provide support, and of course, the women we are here to help who shared their experiences and views on what they see as gaps in support services, to help shape effective services for women on their journeys away from homelessness. Their involvement has enabled us, as an organisation, to grow and do better and to improve the experiences of those we are here for.



SHAPING EFFECTIVE SERVICES

It's essential that our services are as effective as they can be, in supporting people on their journeys to independent living.

That's why we ask those living in our services for their input and feedback continuously. We hold regular meetings where residents are invited to share their views on the services, facilities and activities available, what improvements could be made or support introduced. Residents can also feedback at any time to a member of the team or by using our anonymous suggestion and feedback box.

All of our people have unique stories and perspectives, and it's important that we embrace that. Residents are allocated a keyworker who collaborate with them using a strengths-based approach. This ensures the service is meeting their needs, and provides opportunities to help change direction if needed. Residents are also invited to take part in the recruitment process of support staff, and take a place on the interview panel.

We also have resident representatives on a local homelessness forum, where they not only have a say on Your Place services but those commissioned and delivered by the council, as well as policy. This sense of community and collaboration among residents fosters a sense of empowerment and ownership.

We have developed a Belonging Committee, with leads within our teams who ensure that our processes and decision making puts the views, experiences and needs of our people at the forefront. This group look at the development of policies, procedures and activities to best support residents and employees, ensure we're a safe, supportive and inclusive place to live and work. We also work with residents to mark awareness days and cultural events, which helps to develop understanding and respect.





RESIDENTS ARE INVITED TO
SHARE THEIR VIEWS ON THE SERVICES,
FACILITIES AND ACTIVITIES AVAILABLE,
WHAT **IMPROVEMENTS** COULD BE
MADE OR SUPPORT INTRODUCED.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

The positive impact and developments you've read about wouldn't have been possible without your support. You really have helped to change people's lives as they overcome homelessness.

Whether you've supported with financial donations to help improve and develop the services provided, gifts of time from our wonderful volunteers, or physical items that have helped people at a time when they really need it – thank you.

All of your incredible support is valued and appreciated. Our thanks go to the individuals, schools, community and faith groups, local businesses, corporate partners, trusts and foundations that support the work taking place on a daily basis to transform lives.

Together, you have helped to end homelessness for hundreds of people, and continue to support those impacted by the cost-of-living crisis who are coming through our doors.

GET INVOLVED

But the work isn't done. While homelessness exists, so will we.
And we need your help.

If you're able to support us, to ensure our services are still here for those who need them, we'd be so grateful.


- **volunteer your time** - supporting residents directly; working the teams behind the scenes, or sharing our work within your community, workplace and networks.
- **make a donation or set up a regular gift** to support residents by visiting our website or getting in touch with the team.
- **raise funds**, by holding a bake sale, doing a skydive or anything in-between - we'd love to find out more and can help you set up your fundraising pages.
- **leave a lasting legacy** through a gift in your Will - get in touch and we'll share helpful information on how to write or update your Will for free.

We'd love to speak with you so please contact us on fundraising@your-place.org.uk or visit www.your-place.org.uk for more information.

**WE'RE HERE TO BUILD HOPE
AND ENABLE LASTING CHANGE
TO END HOMELESSNESS FOR
PEOPLE IN EAST LONDON.**

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