

Kingston Churches Action on Homelessness

DECEMBER 2020 NEWSLETTER



Wishing all of our supporters a happy Christmas and a peaceful and healthy New Year!

MESSAGE FROM SOPHIE MAYOR



"The pandemic has been a force for change in all areas of society and has greatly shaped how we respond to the needs of people in housing crisis, who come to us for help.

My former role as Night Shelter Coordinator has changed dramatically since the start of the pandemic. During the first lockdown and beyond, the Night Shelter team were involved in coordinating support for around 60 people who had been or were facing rough sleeping and were self-isolating in the local Travelodge.

Now, I'm heading up the newly-formed **Resident Support Team**. Our first task, in September, was to support this group as they transitioned into other temporary accommodation. Our focus now is on moving all of these residents into more permanent accommodation, in partnership with other support agencies.

The Resident Support Team is managing three 6-bed shared houses (HMOs) and three 1-bed flats, as well as providing on-going support to those still in hotels. So far, we have housed 18 people, with many more moves in the pipeline.

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A green banner with a white circle on the left containing the 'KINGSTON CHURCHES action on homelessness' logo. To the right of the circle is a white box with the text 'WE ARE HIRING' in large, bold, black letters. Below this, in white text on the green background, is 'Experienced staff needed for a new, residential, harm reduction centre.' At the bottom, in a yellow box, are two bullet points: '• 5 Enhanced Recovery Practitioners' and '• Fundraiser'. At the very bottom, in white text on the green background, is the URL 'kcah.org.uk/job-vacancies'.

The Joel Centre is set to reopen as a new **Harm Reduction Centre**, to help those who have experienced rough sleeping and have problematic issues around drug and alcohol. We are in the process of recruiting a specialist team, including a **Service Manager** and **Enhanced Recovery Practitioners**.

If you are interested in either of these roles, please visit our website for more details:

www.kcah.org.uk/job-vacancies

GARDENING CLUB



Jhoana Serna is KCAH's Strength-Based Practitioner. She has been working with our Access tenants to help them start to uncover their potential and self-belief. When Jhoana discovered that a few tenants had a passion for gardening, she encouraged them to start their own fortnightly Gardening Club.

Jhoana said, "From start to finish, the tenants have had ownership of the project and are helped by a few volunteers who also love gardening. What used to be a dumping ground for cigarettes has been planted out. Now it's a really beautiful and peaceful space. It's been tremendously powerful for everyone involved because they are all invested in it - that's the beauty of strength-based work.

Even people who struggled with time-keeping issues are showing regular commitment and turning up promptly. One of the people who attend said to me the other day, 'This group has saved my life. For 2 hours a week I don't have to think about how horrible things have been - thank you!'"

BEFRIENDING SCHEME



KCAH will be piloting a Befriending Scheme, for those who have recently moved into housing, or are still in hotels and may be experiencing feelings of isolation.

The idea is for volunteer befrienders to make a weekly phone call for a friendly chat. This will help to reduce loneliness and help break down 'them and us' barriers between local Kingston residents and those who have experienced homelessness.

MORE DETAILS TO FOLLOW.

Please check our website in the New Year.

Message from Sophie Mayor
(continued from front page)



"As expected, this whole process has been hugely challenging. We have had to balance the financial need to move people out of costly, temporary accommodation, with the risk of moving very vulnerable people into shared housing.

Some have settled in with greater ease than others. For many of those we work with, this is their first home in a number of years. It is vital we support them to keep them there!

The Resident Support Team has been on hand to help with day-to-day issues and to identify their needs. More importantly, we want to help each individual to find out what they want their future to look like and how we can help them to achieve that."

Sophie Mayor, Resident Support Coordinator

WRITING WORKSHOP WITH AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR

KCAH Access tenants were recently treated to a writing workshop with acclaimed author, Malcolm Duffy. Malcolm first visited KCAH last year when researching his latest book, *Sofa Surfer*; a novel looking at what it's like to be a teenager and homeless.

SEE BELOW FOR YOUR CHANCE TO GRAB A SIGNED COPY OF SOFA SURFER, IN EXCHANGE FOR A DONATION TO KCAH!



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MEANINGFUL
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SURFER' AVAILABLE IN
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OF £10 OR MORE TO KCAH !**



KINGSTON CHURCHES
action
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Please contact:
sue.c@KCAH.org.uk

This Christmas

KINGSTON CHURCHES
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Please support our

IN FOR GOOD APPEAL

Help us keep vulnerable people
off the streets for good.

Registered Charity No. 1075890

To donate, please scan with your mobile phone camera:



Thank you for your donation!

KCAH.org.uk



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Cole on:
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a huge difference. Please visit:
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Thank you so much for all your support!

KINGSTON CHURCHES
action
on homelessness

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