

CLOSURE OF THE JOEL STABILISATION CENTRE

STATEMENT FROM OUR CEO

I am writing to you with some very sad news. The Trustees of Kingston Churches Action on Homelessness have taken the very difficult decision to close the Joel Stabilisation Centre at the end of June 2021.

As you may know, KCAH set up the Joel Stabilisation Centre in March last year – the first centre of its kind in London. Over the past year, we've been offering a home in a caring community, as well as intensive 1:1 support, to people who've experienced rough sleeping and face significant issues around drugs and alcohol.

In that time, the Joel team has achieved some incredible things. One resident developed his love of cooking at Joel. He completed a Food Hygiene Level 3 Certificate for his future career progression as a chef. When he completed his recovery journey he was ready to make a new start in Bristol and was able to secure a full time job and accommodation with the help of his new qualification and new found self-belief. Four other residents have made a home at Joel and made fantastic progress on their own recovery journeys. As one resident said recently: "I've been in supported accommodation before, but this... feels different, I feel part of a community, a family".

However, providing the kind of support needed to these vulnerable people 24/7 365 days a year requires a large staff team, and we have been unable to secure funding to run the Centre safely for the whole of the coming financial year. The Board has therefore decided to close the centre at the end of June, which will give us the time to support each of our residents to find the right accommodation. Helping them to find their next home will be our priority between now and then. The decision obviously also impacts our dedicated staff who have worked tirelessly to make Joel the dynamic, innovative and life-changing space it has become – KCAH wants to give them the time and support to find their next step too.

I want to thank all of our Supporters for your prayers, encouragement and financial support. Joel was a ground-breaking new venture - without your help, we would never have been able to get it off the ground, and provide a caring home for our residents over the past year.

I also want to reassure you that we at KCAH remain as passionate as ever about supporting people in the Borough to get and keep a safe and stable home. We now plan to explore other ways to support the homeless in Kingston, alongside our other existing services – our Housing Crisis Intervention Service, and our support to more than 70 residents in KCAH and Council-let houses to rebuild their lives and find lasting solutions out of homelessness.

Any financial help you are able to give us will still go towards supporting our work with some of the poorest and most vulnerable people in the Borough. We expect that the coming year will increase the financial pressures on the people with whom we work, given the impact of the rise in the cost of living, so any support we receive will really make a difference.

With grateful thanks

Aileen Almond, KCAH CEO

