



**Key Issues and Faith Factors**  
Rodie Garland, FaithAction, April 2015

# ABOUT FAITHACTION

FaithAction is a national network of faith and community-based organisations involved in social action. We empower these organisations by offering support, advice and training – we help the ‘do-ers do’. We also have a key role in facilitating partnerships, sharing good practice between organisations and between sectors, and acting as a connector between government and grassroots organisations. We work to highlight the contribution that faith-based organisations are making to communities up and down the country. We believe that the extent and impact of this work, and the reach of faith-based organisations into communities that are often marginalised, mean that faith is too significant to ignore.

FaithAction is a member of the Health and Care

Voluntary Sector Strategic Partnership, working with the Department of Health, NHS England and Public Health England. As the faith ‘voice’ within the Strategic Partnership, we ensure that faith is taken into account in the development of new health policies and initiatives. We believe that faith-based organisations have a role to play in raising health outcomes, particularly among communities that typically suffer from health inequalities. Our recent report, *The Impact of Faith-Based Organisations on Public Health and Social Capital*, looks at this issue in more detail.

You can read more at [www.faithaction.net/report](http://www.faithaction.net/report) or purchase a printed copy for £15 (including UK post and packing) by emailing [info@faithaction.net](mailto:info@faithaction.net).

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Eat ‘n’ Meet  
Elim Connect Centre  
The Fed  
(Jewish Community Social Work Team)

Guru Nanak Mission  
Handcrafted Projects  
Holy Trinity Brompton  
Housing Justice  
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London City Mission  
Midland Langar  
Seva Society  
Mitzvah Day 365  
Muslim Aid  
NACCOM  
New Ark Foundation

Nishkam Centre  
Parvati Project  
Ramadan Tent Project  
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Birmingham  
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Together Lancashire  
Vineyard Community Centre  
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# INTRODUCTION

## The imperative

**Homelessness is a public health issue.** Physical and mental health problems can be caused or exacerbated by homelessness or poor quality housing; they can also, in some cases, lead to a person losing their home. For many years, faith groups in this country have worked to offer food and shelter to those without either, to help people find – or keep – their home, and to meet their other needs along the way.

Many FaithAction members are involved in this work. We know that they face increasing demands in this time of austerity, and that changes to the welfare and benefits system are increasing the hardships for some of those with whom they work. But we also know that faith-based organisations continue to offer support and hope to those most in need, and solutions that other services do not. In fact, faith-based organisations have a dual role: they are on the frontline meeting practical needs, but they also advocate on behalf of others to influence public and political debate.



## Rationale

This report aims to uncover some of the issues that faith-based organisations are facing in their work on homelessness, and to highlight some of the innovative activity that is taking place. It builds on FaithAction's previous work on housing with the Race Equality Foundation, the National Housing Federation and Regional Voices.<sup>1</sup>

The report does not attempt to be a comprehensive survey of faith-inspired work in the area, and there is much that time and space have not allowed us to include. In terms of housing provision in particular, there are many faith-based housing associations in the UK, and faith groups have been involved in work by Community Land Trusts (CLTs)<sup>2</sup> and Citizens UK,<sup>3</sup> both to campaign for more affordable housing, and to develop local solutions. In addition, for more in-depth research looking at homeless people and faith, we recommend the reports *Lost and Found: Faith and spirituality in the lives of homeless people*, published by Lemos & Crane (2013), and *The Role of Faith-Based Organisations in the Provision of Services for Homeless People*, published by the Centre for Housing Policy, University of York (2009). See the Further Information section for details.

Rather, what this report does is to offer a snapshot, both for policymakers – in terms of the needs and issues that exist – and for faith groups – as inspiration regarding what can be done.

## Report background

To gather information from our members we ran an online consultation and provided opportunities for groups to come and discuss the issues with us in person. We also carried out telephone interviews with staff from organisations working in the field, sourced from our membership and from internet research. In total we engaged with 31 organisations.

Those responding represented Christian, Muslim, Sikh, Jewish, Hindu and Buddhist faith groups, and came from all over England. Almost all sought to serve anyone in need regardless of whether they were of the same faith or none.

Groups were offering a variety of provision, working with rough sleepers, sofa-surfers, those in temporary accommodation, asylum seekers and refugees, or simply anyone in need of a hot meal. Night-time

accommodation, food, advocacy/advice/signposting, mentoring, spiritual support and resettlement services were the most common types of support offered.

This report begins with an overview of the key issues that these groups say they face, and the 'faith factors' that they believe make a difference to their work. From these we draw out recommendations for government, and for faith groups themselves. The remainder of the report consists of a set of case studies that illustrate something of the breadth of work being carried out by faith-based and faith-inspired organisations to address homelessness in England.



Picture: Midland Langar Seva Society

1 As part of the Health and Housing Alliance under the Health and Care Voluntary Sector Strategic Partnership. See especially [www.raceequalityfoundation.org.uk/dh-strategic-partners/2013-2014/health-housing-event](http://www.raceequalityfoundation.org.uk/dh-strategic-partners/2013-2014/health-housing-event) and [www.raceequalityfoundation.org.uk/resources/downloads/learning-health-and-housing-events-london-and-leeds-2013](http://www.raceequalityfoundation.org.uk/resources/downloads/learning-health-and-housing-events-london-and-leeds-2013)

2 [www.communitylandtrusts.org.uk](http://www.communitylandtrusts.org.uk)

3 [www.citizensuk.org](http://www.citizensuk.org)

# KEY ISSUES

## Doing more with less

This was one of the chief concerns that groups reported. They recognise that the national economic situation is difficult and are more than willing to continue doing what they are doing – but they fear that the current situation is not sustainable.

*“People are still going to need looking after.”*

*– Residential centre worker*

Organisations face both increased demand and more clients to serve, particularly following changes to the welfare system. One foodbank reported that 43% of those referred to it were in need because of benefit changes, delays or sanctions. Cuts to housing benefit for under-21s and to council tax benefit (particularly for families), and the abolition of crisis loans, were mentioned as being particularly pressing issues. The change from housing benefit to universal credit also affects landlords in ways that will have knock-on effects for tenants in the private rented sector<sup>4</sup>. These issues can also have health impacts: for example, people can find their mental health problems exacerbated by benefit delays. There are also specific faith-related issues at work, such as the fact that Kosher food is relatively expensive.

At the same time, cuts to local authority services mean that faith organisations, which once provided complementary services, are now sometimes the only providers. There is a shortage of accommodation into

which people can be moved. Where specialist services such as drug and alcohol support have been cut, clients might have entrenched issues that are no longer being dealt with elsewhere. Although larger organisations can absorb some of the additional costs, for small groups they are a real pressure.

This led to frustration among some of the groups that they are simply unable to meet all the needs that they encounter. It was recognised that significant funding has been invested in homelessness services over the previous decade, but it was felt that there is currently a risk of this good being undone.

## ‘Silo’ working

In their role as advocates for their clients, some organisations have been frustrated by inflexibility in the statutory system. One group supported a client whose benefits were cut when hospitalisation prevented him from attending Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) appointments. Another group’s clients are sometimes given conflicting appointments with the probation service (missing these would send them back to prison) and Jobcentre Plus (missing these would lead to benefit sanctions). This group also reported that clients were sometimes sent on mandatory courses from which they were unlikely to benefit due to their specific needs, while the group itself was able to provide more suitable courses.

<sup>4</sup> Private landlords now usually collect rent from their tenants directly, rather than previously through the benefit system. This means that they may need to seek legal recourse if a tenant defaults on payments. Meanwhile, in the absence of rental income, landlords may neglect their properties, leaving them to deteriorate. Secondly, longstanding tenants who previously received housing benefit are unlikely to have references confirming their ability to pay rent. This affects insurance for landlords, who in the past could select a specific policy tailored to tenants in receipt of housing benefit. With insurance companies no longer able to discriminate between types of tenants, insurance prices will inevitably rise across the board, with the effects passed on to tenants.



## Cycles of homelessness

The cycle of no job meaning nowhere to live was highlighted. When a person loses their employment, they might also lose their accommodation. Without an address they can find it impossible to get a new job, but without a job they are unable to afford the deposit or advance rent for accommodation. It is particularly worrying that some people fall into this cycle at a young age. There are organisations that cater for them up to the age of 25, but after this they can find themselves sleeping rough.

## Vulnerable women

Some faith groups are working with women in the immigration process who are alone and particularly vulnerable, in addition to the risks faced by anyone who is isolated and unaware of their rights or who they can turn to. In some cultures the idea that a woman should not be without a man can lead to involvement in exploitative relationships, for example with much older 'boyfriends'. One group reported that more women in the area were turning to prostitution, feeling that they had no alternative. These issues can be intertwined with housing issues.

5 TB Alert: [www.tbalert.org/about/tb/statistics-a-targets/uk-stats-and-targets](http://www.tbalert.org/about/tb/statistics-a-targets/uk-stats-and-targets)

6 Wellcome Trust: [www.wellcome.ac.uk/News/2012/News/WTVM056153.htm](http://www.wellcome.ac.uk/News/2012/News/WTVM056153.htm)

# FAITH FACTORS

We asked faith-based organisations how they were making a difference, and how that might be different from the work carried out by other organisations. This is a summary of their responses.

**Faith-based organisations try to address the needs of the whole person.** They focus on seeing clients – often called ‘guests’ – as people, rather than problems to solve. This means that many groups working in this area do not see themselves primarily as ‘homelessness providers’ delivering a service, but as people trying to help other people in whatever ways they can. They offer practical, pastoral and spiritual support, hope to those in crisis, and respect based on a belief in the dignity of all people.

This means that faith-based organisations often set out to **build relationships** with people that enable them to find out and deal with the issues underlying homelessness. As one interviewee said, homelessness is rarely the key issue. Many people who end up on the street have backgrounds of brokenness or a lack of love and security: starting life in care, or broken relationships. This can be compounded by issues such as drug or alcohol problems or mental ill-health. Others who are homeless may face issues around employment or immigration. They might experience stigmatisation, for example if they are disabled or HIV positive. Faith-based organisations dealing with homelessness often look to address all of these factors – in effect, they offer a mentoring service.

**Case work and advocacy** are part of this. Staff in faith-based organisations might commit to staying ‘on someone’s case’ and not giving up on them. They might offer **support in navigating the system** to ensure that people get the services and benefits they are entitled to. They also speak up on behalf of clients, challenging practices they feel to be unjust, or cases where benefits have not been administered correctly. One group we talked to said their faith meant that they sometimes took on clients whom other services saw as ‘hopeless cases’,

or gave people another chance where others would not, because of a deep imperative to help others.

In line with their holistic approach, faith groups – especially if they are providing non-commissioned services – tend to have a **flexibility** that more formal services cannot achieve. For example, where resources allow, faith groups have donated rent deposits for homeless people to enable them to move on by gaining their own accommodation – providing the start that someone needs to break out the cycle of not being able to afford a place of their own.

This flexibility means that faith-based organisations are often free to **work across ‘silos’** to find creative solutions that follow the person, rather than being restricted to delivering a certain kind of service. We came across several examples of this:

- Joint working with health services, such as day centres that offer access to GPs, or have a relationship with a local GP whom they can call on behalf of clients.
- Courses run by centres for homeless people that fulfil the requirements of the criminal justice system or DWP, meaning that clients receive a holistic service from a single provider.
- A project that began as a soup kitchen but is in essence a befriending service for people with underlying, complex needs, including mental health problems, addictions, or issues such as immigration problems or domestic violence.
- A faith centre that offers free meals alongside an advice service, providing a single point of access to support with issues of housing, financial difficulty, debt, benefits and employment. Specialist housing solicitors and benefit and employment law advisors are available.
- A joint project between Sikh and Christian organisations to equip people with the IT and language skills they need to bid for a home.





Picture: Guru Nanak Mission

Faiths-based organisations often have a **‘whatever it takes’** mentality, based on the compelling idea that we have a responsibility to look after each other. This can mean stepping in to meet a need, even at personal cost. For example, we heard reports that some faith group members have taken people with no recourse to public funds into their own homes while their cases progressed.

*“Communities engaging and exploring homelessness together builds stronger communities.”*

– Night shelter worker

Faith groups tend to have a **community** to call on, as volunteers and supporters for their work. These people are likely to share a set of moral and ethical values that support the work and give them a shared commitment to undertaking it. The use of **volunteers**, alongside this shared mission and passion, mean that funding can go further. The groups responding to our online consultation between them employed a little over a hundred paid workers, but over two and a half thousand volunteers.

Faith groups also provide a ready-made community for others to join, if they wish, with an infrastructure and **support system**. As one interviewee pointed out, the question ‘Does anyone care about me?’ is at the root of much ‘dis-ease’. Faith communities are capable of supplying a level of care – of love – beyond that provided by professional services. They also work ‘on the ground’: they know where the needs are and who in the wider community can help to meet those needs.

Furthermore, the work itself can contribute to **community-building**, as people learn about each other and their preconceptions are broken down. Several of the groups we talked to said that their volunteers report increased compassion and understanding, and that

volunteers themselves report benefitting from the work. Indeed, a number of groups reported that previous clients have come back to volunteer with the project, or have even been taken on as paid employees. This stems from an approach that recognises that **everyone has something they can give**, even if they are also in need.

A number of groups were involved in **educating others on homelessness issues**. This commonly meant going into schools to give assemblies and lessons about homelessness, but other examples were provided by groups that had briefed local politicians on homelessness in the area, or that went out to educate and resource other faith groups, supporting them to become involved in practical work. In one case a Muslim charity saw part of its role as educating Muslims about the needs in their local communities, in the face of a culture that often sees ‘charity’ as being about sending money overseas.

Finally, faith organisations often have **physical assets** such as buildings that can be used as resources. Housing Justice’s **Faith in Affordable Housing**<sup>7</sup> project encourages churches that have under-used land or buildings to look at local need and create more housing.

At heart, however, much of faith-based organisations’ work in this area is based on the simple practice of **hospitality** – the importance of which is something that all faiths agree on.

*“We treat someone as a human being who needs to be loved, not as a ‘case.’”*

– Day centre worker

<sup>7</sup> [www.fiah.org.uk](http://www.fiah.org.uk)

# RECOMMENDATIONS

These are the messages from people working on the front line of homelessness – both to government and to faith groups themselves.

## For government

- **Recognise that housing is linked with health and educational outcomes** and prioritise it accordingly. When people live in insecure or crowded housing, health needs can be exaggerated, and passed from one generation to another. When children live without a place of security, or a quiet space to do homework, their schooling and wider development will suffer. The government should build on A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to support joint action on improving health through the home (2014).<sup>8</sup>
- **Invest in creating safe, genuinely affordable and sustainable housing, as a public good** that will pay back in this and future generations. A secure home helps adults and children feel rooted in and able to contribute to society. We need to create housing for both single people and families. And we need to redefine 'affordable' housing, because under the official definition – rent set at 80% of the local market rent – it remains unaffordable in many cases.
- **Regulate the private rented sector**, as it is often the only sector available in which to house people. We know that more households are now living in the private rented sector; that poor housing conditions are more prevalent in this sector than others; and that poor housing can impact on health and wellbeing. Black and minority ethnic communities are disproportionately affected by these issues.<sup>9</sup>
- **Focus on security of tenure.** Housing services should recognise that placing someone into the private rented sector is not the 'end of the story'. A person who has been street homeless for some time might need considerable ongoing support to maintain a private tenancy. And the end of a private tenancy (which can come suddenly) is a major cause of homelessness.<sup>10</sup>
- **Be bold in thinking across silos.** A well-run centre for homeless people could also run Jobcentre Plus or offender management services for its clients. DWP should work with health services to ensure that people are not sanctioned for missed appointments while they are hospital in-patients. The Troubled Families Programme offers lessons for how this can be done, with personalised, 'wraparound' support and good multi-agency working seen as critical.<sup>11</sup>
- **Acknowledge that holistic work with homeless people is not just a 'cost' but a long-term 'cost saver'.** Caritas Anchor House, one of the projects profiled here, estimates that it provides a return to society of £3.98 for every £1 invested in it. Effective services help people break out of a downward spiral that can lead to mental health problems and medical conditions as well as homelessness. All of these are expensive to address. Preventative work can help people deal with health issues before they escalate, as well as to improve their qualifications, find work and contribute to society.
- **Recognise that addressing homelessness takes everyone's involvement.** Neither statutory services nor voluntary organisations, including faith groups, can deal with everything: both have a role to play. Grassroots provision needs to be encouraged, not 'professionalised'.
- **Provide long-term funding for services that are proven to be effective**, rather than just funding short-term 'innovation' projects.
- **Recognise that faith groups are a source of support for those suffering from relationship breakdown or bereavement**, which are major causes of homelessness. Support faith groups that are providing services to address these issues, as a preventative factor.

8 [www.cih.org/resources/PDF/Policy%20free%20download%20pdfs/MOU%20project%20final%20Dec%202014.pdf](http://www.cih.org/resources/PDF/Policy%20free%20download%20pdfs/MOU%20project%20final%20Dec%202014.pdf)

9 See work by the Race Equality Foundation: [www.better-housing.org.uk/briefings/ethnicity-health-and-private-rented-sector](http://www.better-housing.org.uk/briefings/ethnicity-health-and-private-rented-sector)

10 See Race Equality Foundation, Regional Voices and FaithAction (2013) *Learning from Health and Housing events, London and Leeds 2013*. Online: [www.raceequalityfoundation.org.uk/resources/downloads/learning-health-and-housing-events-london-and-leeds-2013](http://www.raceequalityfoundation.org.uk/resources/downloads/learning-health-and-housing-events-london-and-leeds-2013)

11 See for example London Councils (2014) *Troubled Families Programme: Lessons for future public service reform*. London: London Councils [www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/policylobbying/londonmatters/reform/troubledfamilies.htm](http://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/policylobbying/londonmatters/reform/troubledfamilies.htm)

## For faith-based organisations

- **Lead by example** – whether that is in setting up or taking part in initiatives such as those illustrated here, or in using assets such as buildings to create new housing. Let other organisations in the area know what is going on and encourage them to take part.
- **Be willing to build relationships with people** and support them to address other issues in their lives. This is more difficult than simply handing out food, but has greater long-term effect.
- **Be an advocate: speak up on behalf of those in need.** This could mean contacting professional services, speaking to the media if appropriate, or taking issues up with politicians.
- **See work to prevent family breakdown as an important part of preventing homelessness.** This is true for everyone but particularly applies to young people.
- **Be informed about homelessness in the local area**, and willing to work with other organisations such as hostels or the police. The Homeless UK and Homeless London websites can help here. Engage with local and national efforts to share information, such as CHAIN in London (see Further Information section for links).
- **Make use of existing support** – for example, if considering setting up a night shelter, use the support available from Housing Justice, and its Quality Mark (see Further Information section).
- **Develop ways of recording the impact of the work** – this can make it easier to access funding (see Further Information section).
- **Hold the Government to account** regarding what it is doing to create more housing. This could mean contacting MPs and asking them to raise the issue of the national housing shortage, or asking local councillors to act on the needs identified locally. The **Faith Manifesto** from FaithAction contains a list of questions to ask local politicians – such as whether they know what issues matter to faith groups locally, and how they will support local initiatives.<sup>12</sup>
- **Help to build homes, not just housing.** Learn from the experience of people who have lived without a home to put in place the things that matter, like connections with the community.

The following sections of the report use case studies to illustrate the different kinds of work that faith-based organisations are doing to address the problems of homelessness: providing food for those who are hungry, night-time accommodation, safe places to be in the day and longer term and residential solutions.

<sup>12</sup> [www.yoursay.faithaction.net](http://www.yoursay.faithaction.net)

Picture: Guru Nanak Mission

# FOOD FOR THE HUNGRY

Faith-based organisations have a long history of providing food for those in need, and they continue to do so today, serving homeless people in particular. As the case studies in this section show, they often work in partnership with other organisations to ensure that food reaches those who need it most. This is only a small selection of the many initiatives going on all over the country, which include the well-known work of organisations such as the Salvation Army's continuing work, and the Trussell Trust in running foodbanks. For directory listings of soup runs, see the Further Information section.

## Midland Langar Seva Society

The *langar* in Sikhism is a free kitchen, serving food to all. This idea has been taken onto the streets by Sikh communities in a number of cities, providing food for homeless people and anyone in need. The Midland Langar Seva Society is one such organisation, providing free food in 11 towns in England and Wales. Sikh communities cook the food, in some cases working in partnership with other organisations, including the Cardiff Homeless Centre, the Salvation Army in Ilford, the Little Brothers of the Good Shepherd in Wolverhampton, and other Sikh groups; in others, members simply distribute food in the town centre one or two nights a week, where a queue will have formed before their arrival. Typically, around a dozen volunteers distribute meals and drinks to 140-180 people. The charity does not accept donations of money, but only of food, time, and buildings to use as bases. One of the co-founders of the project speaks of the effect the work has on the volunteers, from his personal experience of becoming more compassionate and thankful for what he has. When someone thanks you for the food, he says, "You shout inside".

[www.facebook.com/midlandlangarsevasociety](http://www.facebook.com/midlandlangarsevasociety)

*"When someone thanks you for the food you shout inside."*

## Guru Nanak Mission

Guru Nanak Mission runs a *langar* in Derby, distributing food at weekends in the town centre. The provision of free, nutritious, hot meals for those on or below the poverty line has led users of the service to tell the organisers that they are literally saving lives. One man, who came to the UK from Spain looking for employment and a better quality of life, had no National Insurance number and no right to benefits. He would sleep on a friend's sofa and spend his days studying English at the library, coming regularly to the project for many months. Eventually he got himself on his feet, found a job and is now a dedicated volunteer with the project, helping cook and distribute meals. In the long term, Guru Nanak Mission would like to set up a rehabilitation centre for homeless people, and to see them given support with their mental health, gaining skills and finding jobs so that they can play a full part in society.

[tinyurl.com/pmnpwt](http://tinyurl.com/pmnpwt)

## Parvati Project

The Shiva Trust works in Lancashire and greater Manchester. Inspired by Hindu teachings, the Parvati Project distributes free, vegan home-cooked meals to homeless people from a mobile catering van named Parvati. The van also visits housing estates in deprived areas, distributing hot food and frozen meals.

Those who come for food are treated as loving souls who are serving a higher purpose, regardless of how society views them. In addition to providing food, the project aims to raise awareness of issues around food in today's society.

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

## Ramadan Tent Project

Open Iftar, run by the Ramadan Tent Project, occurs every evening during the holy month of Ramadan. A free meal to end the day of fasting is shared with everyone who comes to the tent, but the project is particularly aimed at homeless people, as well as international students who might be far from friends and family. The aim is to provide for people in need, to create a social space in which people from all walks of life can interact, to provide a way for Muslims to engage with others and tackle stereotypes, and to show the essence of Islam by bringing people together in a harmonious way during Ramadan.

Prior to the shared meal, an invited speaker addresses the guests. Speakers have included Mehdi Hassan, journalist from the Huffington Post UK; Rabbi Natan

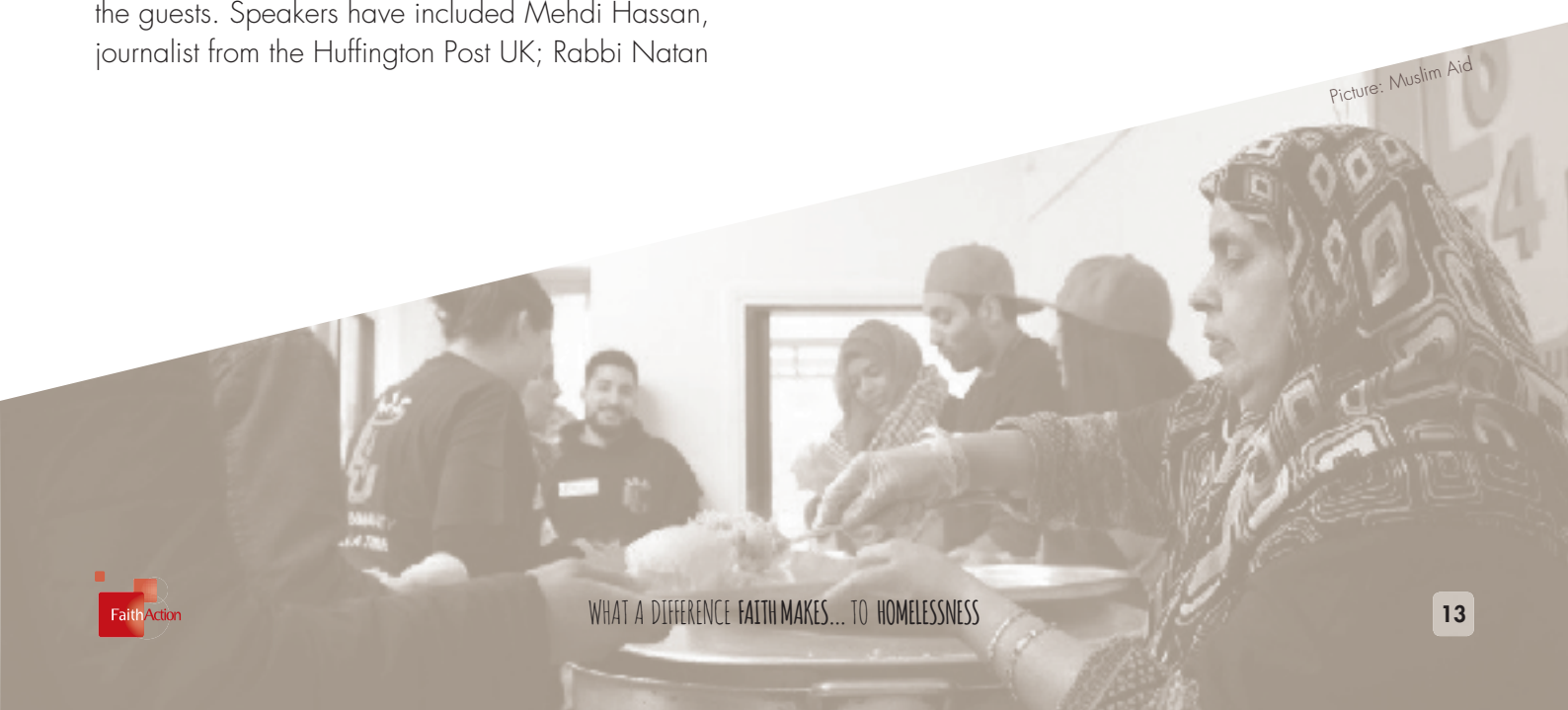
Levy of the Board of Deputies of British Jews; Dr Paul Webley, Principal of SOAS, University of London; and representatives from St Mungo's working in its outreach services and Muslim Women's Project. Afterwards, there is time for discussion, and then leftover food is delivered to homeless shelters, including St Mungo's.

The project is staffed by volunteers and was set up as a student-led project at SOAS, although professionals and homeless people are now included among the volunteers. One homeless person who first came to the project as a guest became a volunteer and then joined the steering committee. He found accommodation and a job, from which he has taken leave in order to participate in the project. He embodies the project's ethos that homeless people should not be seen only as people in need.

The project has been held in 2011, 2013 and 2014. Over 10,000 meals have been given out. Each evening around 250-300 guests attend, including up to 30 homeless people.

[www.ramadantentproject.com/projects.html](http://www.ramadantentproject.com/projects.html)

Picture: Muslim Aid







## Eat 'n' Meet

Eat 'n' Meet is a Saturday drop-in service for homeless and vulnerable people in Leicester. It provides a hot meal, opportunities to socialise, and signposting to other services, including housing and health.

Guests sign in on arrival and first-time visitors are asked about their accommodation status. If someone is sleeping rough and has not accessed statutory services, the volunteer staff try to find them a place at a nearby hostel or support them to contact its outreach team. Food is provided by a caterer, paid for by donations, and also by a local Sikh community. Board games, pool and table tennis are available, and guests can chat with each other and with the volunteers, or just rest.

Between around 40 and 65 people attend each session. Many report that the company and chance to socialise offered by the project are more important to them than the food. As volunteers get to know the guests, they are able to find out about their needs and offer help. On one occasion, a guest collapsed while at the project and staff were able to quickly get him the necessary medical attention.

The project began in response to an observed need for food for homeless people and for somewhere warm and safe to go, particularly at weekends. The ethos is that volunteers welcome the guests as if into their own home, showing them the same understanding and tolerance they would any guest.

Eat 'n' Meet is run by the Islamic Society of Britain and uses the venue of St James the Greater Church; most of the volunteers are Muslim or Christian, but some are of other faiths or none. It is part of the One Roof

Leicester consortium of faith, community and voluntary organisations working to address homelessness in the city.

[www.isb.org.uk/eatnmeet](http://www.isb.org.uk/eatnmeet)

## Mitzvah Day 365

Mitzvah Day is a worldwide project of the Jewish community, which galvanises people to get involved in local social action projects. While the focus is on Mitzvah Day itself, the aim is that the projects lead to partnerships that continue throughout the year. In this way they work to build stronger communities, meet local needs by creating durable links between different faiths and existing charities, and cultivate relationships with other faith groups. The projects are planned and run by community groups such as synagogues and schools, with support from Mitzvah Day 365, who link the volunteers with local charities if necessary, and encourage them to continue to work together.

A number of the projects work with homelessness charities, particularly shelters, and with foodbanks; St Mungo's Broadway and the Trussell Trust are partners, and in 2014 an estimated 150-200 shelters and foodbanks were involved. For 'Mitzvah Day Shopping' projects, volunteers at supermarkets encouraged people to buy extra food, while 'Give away your lunch' saw people at workplaces donating lunch items. The volunteers themselves then delivered the food to shelters, meeting the staff and, where appropriate, the service users. Other projects have involved local faith representatives gathering to cook together and deliver the food to shelters, and volunteers going into shelters to paint and decorate.





Picture: Caritas Anchor House

In 2014, 500 community groups were involved in Mitzvah Day, with around 70 of these running Mitzvah Day Shopping projects, 77 running 'Give away your lunch', and around 50 working with the Trussell Trust to help local foodbanks. Mitzvah Day 365 collects anecdotal feedback from the local charities helped: for example, a shelter for homeless young people reported that with the support of Mitzvah Day they were able to provide breakfasts, lunches and refreshments for over 250 young people.

For Mitzvah Day 365, the challenge of the work is to facilitate meaningful giving by communities beyond the project day. This is particularly difficult when working in the sensitive area of homelessness, as volunteers cannot always meet the service users and so be motivated by seeing the impact of their efforts on individuals' lives. However, the organisation works on the basis that people of faith often have a strong sense of duty to help others, and offers them a way to live this out.

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

## Muslim Aid

Muslim Aid's Warm Hearts Winter Campaign centres on the distribution of 'Keep Warm Kits' to homeless people via shelters, as well as to vulnerable elderly people. The kits include food, sleeping bags, gloves, socks, hats and other winter essentials. Muslim Aid also runs soup kitchen sessions through mosques and churches, and a programme with schools and mosques to collect food and distribute it to foodbanks.

Muslim Aid works nationally, with its main bases in London, Birmingham and Manchester. It focuses on providing for the immediate needs of street homeless people of all backgrounds, alongside support for their wider circumstances, and is looking to develop this to include more long-term support. Partnership with Shelter allows it to provide access to housing advice, information on foodbanks and emergency hardship funding, so that people do not lose their accommodation for want of a few pounds.

Between December 2014 and mid-January 2015, 560 Keep Warm Kits were distributed to homeless people. The previous winter, 1463 kits went to homeless or elderly people, 1764 homeless people were helped with advice and essential items through the partnership with Shelter, 145 people were given hardship funding and 44 soup kitchen sessions were run. However, the charity perceives the need increasing year on year and is looking to increase the numbers of those helped.

Muslim Aid is also piloting a Prisoners Rehabilitation Project, which will provide mentors from among the Muslim community for prisoners. Muslim prisoners make up almost 30% of male inmates in London, although the scheme is aimed at prisoners from all backgrounds. Mentors are provided for inmates who are soon to be released, to help them access support and avoid them becoming homeless or reoffending.

[www.muslimaid.org/what-we-do/uk-programmes/warm-hearts-winter-campaign](http://www.muslimaid.org/what-we-do/uk-programmes/warm-hearts-winter-campaign)

# HELP THROUGH THE NIGHT

Night shelters staffed by volunteers are run in places of worship all over the country – including churches, mosques and synagogues. Typically a shelter is open from November to March and operates from a different place of worship on each night of the week within a local area. Guests are provided with a cooked evening meal, a warm bed, and breakfast. Most shelters have a referral procedure and aim to help guests find accommodation and move back into settled society. While the majority of volunteers come from the venue congregations, others are friends of existing volunteers or simply members of the public who want to join in. The first case studies in this section takes two local networks of night shelters as examples. Of course, there are other kinds of help available to those who find themselves on the streets at night, and the rest of this section illustrates some of these.

## CARIS Islington Cold Weather Shelter

CARIS Islington is a charity that coordinates a circuit of night shelters based in churches around the borough during the winter months. In turn, this is part of the network of shelter projects supported by Housing Justice. The shelters aim to support people to flourish as human beings, in conjunction with the clinical and professional support offered by other services.

Most of those using the shelters are rough sleepers. They are treated as guests and provided with an evening meal, time to socialise, a bed and breakfast.

Teams of volunteers cook and serve the food, chat with the guests and stay overnight. While the shelters specialise in offering hospitality and pastoral care, they also act as a 'go between' with other services and so are able to help guests access additional support, with volunteers accompanying them to access these services if required. At CARIS Islington, other activities have grown out of the work of the shelter. It runs a boxing club for homeless people, which not only provides a safe space to exercise and channel energy and frustrations but, according to staff, has helped its users become more willing to accept help and access services.

**Housing Justice** is the national voice of Christian action in the field of housing and homelessness, believing that human dignity is challenged by the lack of decent housing. It supports night shelters, drop-ins and practical projects nationwide by providing advice and training for churches and other community groups that work with homeless people.

Housing Justice supports churches and other groups to set up, run and develop winter night shelters. There are shelters in 28 London boroughs, and in many other cities in England and Wales. The charity reports that in winter 2013-14, £1.5m worth of volunteer hours were worked in the night shelters it supported in London alone. Across the country, 1,577 guests were offered overnight shelter; 491 of these received some sort of move on accommodation, and 934 received case management support<sup>13</sup>. The Housing Justice Shelter Quality Mark, launched with the help of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Faith and Society, is a standard of excellence for groups running shelters and a channel for advice, support and training – see the Further Information section.

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

13 Housing Justice (2014). *Night Shelter IMPACT Report 2013 / 14. Report on the Housing Justice network of Church and Community Night Shelters*. London: Housing Justice. [www.housingjustice.org.uk/pages/shelters.html](http://www.housingjustice.org.uk/pages/shelters.html)

The shelters are supported by Housing Justice to collect evidence of their activities, which includes numbers of bed nights provided, numbers of guests case managed, accommodation outcomes and positive moves on, such as starting employment or training. In their time at the CARIS Islington shelter:

- 30% of guests are linked with appropriate specialist support services, eg drug and alcohol or mental health services, and multiple services for complex needs
- 25% are linked with other support services, eg asylum and refugee services, other health and wellbeing services, ethnic community support groups, or mentoring and befriending support
- 10% are linked with professional support to help with their precarious housing circumstances, eg overcrowding, sofa-surfing or threats of eviction or abandonment

The project recognises that the best outcomes are those that are appropriate for the individual – simply taking a shower might represent huge progress for some, while others have made great steps and are now volunteering for the project.

CARIS Islington holds the PQASSO Quality Mark and the Housing Justice Shelter Quality Mark, which benchmarks best practice across the shelter projects network.

[www.carisislington.org](http://www.carisislington.org)

*"It supports you to almost get back to normal life. It prevents me getting depressed and alone. It is very reassuring to know that you have a bed for the night."*

– Guest, CARIS Islington Cold Weather Shelter<sup>14</sup>

Route 18 Winter Shelter started in 2008 when the Anglican clergy in South Brent were sharing their experiences of a growing number of homeless people arriving at vicarage doors, and discussing ways to help in an empowering and sustainable way. They approached Cricklewood Homeless Concern (CHC, now called Ashford Place) to work in partnership: the churches offered buildings and volunteers, and CHC their experience and expertise. The resulting initiative was Route 18 winter shelter, so called because in the first two years, all the churches involved were on the number 18 bus route. In the second year, the number of participating churches grew to 11, and by the third year 14 church centres and one mosque were involved. Of the 82 guests who accessed the winter shelter in one year, 60% were helped to find accommodation.

Felicity Scroggie, part of leadership team at the project, explains the 'value added' by the faith-based ethos of Route 18:

*"This is not simply a night shelter that feeds people and then sends them back out onto the streets. Nor is it simply a professional charity that addresses complex life problems of many guests. It is an integral partnership between the volunteers who offer themselves and their resources to brothers and sisters who are equally within the love and compassion of God, and the expert staff who are able to help guests address their complex issues and so begin to rebuild their lives. Guests this year affirmed just how life-giving this combination is. As one guest said, 'I came with nothing and you gave me everything. You didn't ask for anything in return. I found a family'. The ethos of human dignity, compassion and friendship is at the core of this project."*

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

<sup>14</sup> From CARIS Islington Annual Report 2012 [www.carisislington.org/phdi/p1.nsf/supppages/1381?opendocument&part=4](http://www.carisislington.org/phdi/p1.nsf/supppages/1381?opendocument&part=4)

## Depaul Nightstop UK

Depaul Nightstop UK is part of Depaul UK, an organisation based on Catholic roots and working with young people who are homeless, vulnerable and disadvantaged. Nightstop services are run by various organisations, supported by Depaul, in 40 locations across the UK. They offer a safety net for young people aged 16-25, to prevent them from sleeping rough or in dangerous situations, by placing them with trained volunteer hosts. While Nightstop is not itself faith-based, many of these volunteers are recruited from churches and other faith groups and undertake hosting as a way of living out their faith.<sup>15</sup>

Nightstop services work proactively with potential referral agencies, such as college welfare teams, youth groups, and homeless drop-ins, as well as local authority housing and leaving care teams, so that should a young person present to them in housing need, they are able to make a referral straight away. The Nightstop service assesses the young person's support needs and the level of risk they present. Suitable young people are placed with hosts who provide a meal, bedroom, washing facilities and breakfast, as well as the chance to talk or space to reflect. In the morning the young person returns to the referral agency to work on resolving their situation, and is re-referred for the next night's accommodation if necessary, usually with different hosts. Most young people move into hostel accommodation after several nights with Nightstop.

Nightstop London reports that the average length of stay was 11 nights in 2014, up from seven the previous year. The process of referring young people

into accommodation is taking longer as numbers of people 'in the system' have risen. Changes to the benefits system mean that people might need emergency housing while they are under benefit sanctions and cannot move on until sanctions are lifted, or they might be arrivals from the EU who are not entitled to benefits while they look for private rented accommodation. Meanwhile, the longer young people stay with Nightstop, the fewer beds are available for new referrals. Nightstop London says that it turns away around 30% of young people who come to it, as need outstrips the supply of beds.

When Nightstop can take on young people, it works with housing advice partners and other services to ensure that the young person gets the support they need. In some areas Nightstop services include tenancy support, family mediation, preventative education work, housing advice and supported lodgings (working with a local authority to place the young person with a host for up to two years).

In 2013, Nightstop provided 11,755 bed nights and volunteer hosts gave over 176,000 hours of their time. Young people often report that at a time when they felt excluded by other services and by society, the welcome offered by hosts made a big difference to them. Something as simple as sharing in a family dinner could help them to feel more positive about their future and more able approach other services.

[www.depaulnightstopuk.org](http://www.depaulnightstopuk.org)

<sup>15</sup> In the UK, the proportion of people who have volunteered for local community action is 6% among those who belong to a religious organisation, compared with 1% among those who do not. Birdwell, J. and Littler, M. (2012) *Faithful citizens: Why those that do God, do good*. London: Demos.

## On the streets

Street Pastors are volunteer Christians with a concern for their community, who have been trained to care for, listen to and help people in practical ways and provide a reassuring presence as they patrol the streets on weekend nights. As well as providing support for people who are vulnerable because they have had too much to drink or become separated from friends, Street Pastors spend time chatting with and listening to street homeless people. They may refer people to homelessness services or night shelters, or help them to access health services. They have also helped with rough sleeper counts. Street Pastors is an initiative of the Ascension Trust.

[www.streetpastors.org](http://www.streetpastors.org)

Greenlight is run by Hillsong church in London, and sends a medical van staffed by skilled volunteers onto the streets to offer basic medical care to rough sleepers, alongside advice and signposting.

[hillsong.com/london/becausewecan/greenlight](http://hillsong.com/london/becausewecan/greenlight)

## Tackling destitution

NACCOM, The No Accommodation Network, is a group of affiliated organisations working with asylum seekers or migrants with no recourse to public funds. It aims to tackle homelessness among these groups, to reduce barriers to affordable housing for refugees, and to end destitution in the UK. The members of the network, many of which are faith-based, run a number of different accommodation schemes. They include night shelters, hosting schemes offering a spare room in a house, shared houses leased at peppercorn or reduced rents, joint projects with housing associations, and putting empty church buildings back into use. The network supports its members by helping them to share resources and best practice and by encouraging new initiatives and strengthening existing schemes.

[nacom.org.uk](http://nacom.org.uk)



# A SAFE SPACE

One of the key factors behind faith-based organisation's work with homeless people is the partnerships involved. The case studies of drop-in centres featured here demonstrate how faith groups, with the volunteers they engage, other voluntary sector organisations, businesses and professional services can all play a vital role in meeting the needs of local communities.

## Elim Connect Centre

The Elim Connect Centre is a community hub in a rural area in the Wells and Mendip district, run by the Elim Church. The hub aims to connect different organisations, agencies and people in order to serve and work with the community. It is a means for developing relationships between people and organisations to make a difference in the community.

The centre has two main elements: a hub out of which different agencies can operate, and the running of services for vulnerable people. The hub element is needed because in this rural area services can be disparate and transport links are poor, meaning that people with chaotic lives might not access services at all; meanwhile, the services have a number of mutual clients. The hub gives agencies a base to work from and clients an increased ability to access them.

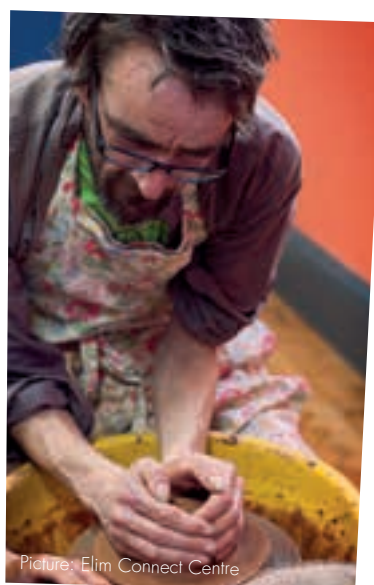
The services run by the centre are for those who might otherwise 'slip through the net', particularly rough sleepers, as well as young people. The centre works with all three tiers of local government and many other agencies, including: three GP surgeries; the mental health, drug and alcohol and public health teams; Citizens Advice Bureau; Langley House Trust; YMCA; Turning Point; and the police.

The centre's own services include the Street Level Access Programme (SLAP). This began as a soup kitchen, but is in essence a befriending service for people with multiple and complex needs, recognising that people

presenting with homelessness or housing need often have underlying issues. This project runs day services at the centre and at hubs in other towns in the area. It is funded through donations and small grants.


The centre also runs services commissioned by local government, which include outreach workers for rough sleepers, and a health inclusion service commissioned by the public health team. This is for homeless people and rough sleepers, as well as the Traveller community. A health inclusion worker conducts initial health assessments, and GPs and dentists visit the sessions. The good outcomes from these services, such as the impacts on numbers of rough sleepers, numbers not returning to rough sleeping and numbers referred to medical services, mean that contracts with local government have been renewed in recognition of the value they provide.

[www.connect-elim.org.uk](http://www.connect-elim.org.uk)



Picture: Elim Connect Centre





*"We all have something we can give  
and we all have something we need."*

– Elim Connect Centre

Picture: Elim Connect Centre

## Asylum seekers' drop-in

A London-based synagogue runs a drop-in centre offering a package of support for asylum seekers. The centre provides a warm welcome, food, clothing, supermarket vouchers and baby equipment, as well as consultations with lawyers, doctors and therapists. If any of its clients are placed in immigration detention, the centre works with lawyers to try to get them released. Asylum seekers can self-refer or are referred by lawyers or other charities. The centre is proud of the diversity of its volunteers, who come from the synagogue community and from many other communities: from all the major faiths and none, and from different generations and cultures.

## Vineyard Community Centre

Vineyard Community Centre in the London Borough of Richmond offers open-access, drop-in support for homeless people. The centre also operates a community hub, with a foodbank, a coffee bar a variety of activity groups. Run jointly by several churches, the centre is fully independent, with costs covered by voluntary contributions, trust funding and in-kind support from businesses.

The morning drop-in sessions are aimed at people who are homeless or in crisis, but are open to everyone. They provide free tea, coffee and toast, with a cooked breakfast for 50p on some days. People can make use of showers, towels, soap and shaving toiletries; free clothes, shoes, sleeping bags and tents are available when in stock, and haircuts are provided by a local barber once a week. The centre also offers free internet and telephone access, alongside signposting to other services and the opportunity to get to know volunteers from the local community. A caseworker works with those who come in, using the Outcomes Star™ to

measure their progress. The morning drop-in runs Monday to Thursday, and on a typical day is visited by 40 people.

Other agencies also work through the centre: these include statutory homeless services, Richmond's SPEAR (a charity supporting people to move into accommodation), drug and alcohol services, Citizens Advice, debt advice services and health services. The centre has links with two local GP practices, which permit centre users to register with them and obtain referrals, and understand that the centre may call on these patients' behalf. Local health services know that they can call the centre as a means of trying to find out about the whereabouts or wellbeing of the homeless people known to them who are seriously ill.

The centre has eight parttime and one full-time staff members, around 40-50 regular volunteers and a similar number ad-hoc volunteers. Around a third of the volunteers are from churches. Volunteers also include former users of the centre – one of the managers was once a rough sleeper – and supported volunteers, who might have mental health needs or be in recovery from other issues, and who are volunteering as a form of therapy.

Staff have noticed that it is often seemingly small things that make a big difference and can save lives – for example, the centre manager makes a note of everyone's birthday and it is celebrated with a cake. What staff at the centre value most is the restoration of a person's life and hope.

[www.vineyardcommunity.org](http://www.vineyardcommunity.org)

*"Jesus didn't have 'clients' – he had friends."*

– Vineyard Community Centre staff member

# SOLUTIONS FOR THE LONG TERM

This section provides some examples of the kind of work being done with homeless people to help them progress in their lives. This type of long-term provision, in particular, requires sustainable funding to make an impact. At the back of this report is information on the Faith Covenant, a set of principles that faith-based organisations and local authorities can agree on together, to help local councils become confident in commissioning services from faith groups.

## YMCA

There are 114 YMCAs in England, and YMCA is the largest provider of safe, supported accommodation for young people in the country. The movement is founded on Christian values and focuses on supporting young people to belong, contribute and thrive in their communities. Every year it intensively supports over 228,000 young people, with almost 800,000 hours of volunteer time involved. YMCAs provide nearly 10,000 beds every night, the majority of which are in the form of supported accommodation, but provision ranges from emergency beds and student accommodation to longer-term supported living and move-on housing. Alongside somewhere to live, YMCAs seek to support young people holistically, helping them to gain the training, skills and confidence to go on to lead independent lives.

For example, through Supported Lodgings and Nightstop, YMCAs can accommodate vulnerable young people in a Host's home for anything from a few days to up to two years. The young person becomes a member of the household, receiving the support of the family they live with as well as from YMCA staff. This might cover budgeting, shopping and cooking, claiming benefits, finding work and moving on to their own independent homes. There are 12 YMCAs running the scheme with over 300 Host families involved.

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

## The Salvation Army: William Booth Centre

The William Booth Centre in Birmingham provides a programme for homeless people, giving them the 'first stage' support of somewhere safe to stay for three months. During this time they go through an intensive assessment process designed to determine the holistic support they need that will give them the skills and help necessary to move into next stage accommodation.

The programme is aimed at anyone aged over 21 who has nowhere to go – most are rough sleepers – and can house 74 people at a time. They are referred through the centralised Birmingham Gateway process and come in for an interview to decide whether they are suitable for the project. If accepted, they are allocated a key worker, and are then assessed and their support planned – covering areas such as tenancy readiness, health, addiction issues, basic skills needs, employment support and involvement with the criminal justice system.

Support is provided either in-house or together with other agencies. These come into the centre according to the needs of the residents and also for a regular information fair, and might include Crisis Skylight, sexual health clinics, the Christians Against Poverty debt advice service, housing associations and drug agencies. The centre also provides leisure activities according to the

Picture: Caritas Anchor House

*"We always show we value the clients we work with, because nobody else has."*

– William Booth Centre staff member

interests of the client group, and a spiritual programme, with chaplaincy staff available to meet with clients, worship and prayer services, and discussion groups. After three months the aim is that they are ready to move on to the next stage in their development, which might be temporary accommodation or somewhere more permanent, but should be a positive move.

Funding comes from the Supporting People programme through the local authority. The outcomes that the project is required to meet include numbers making a positive move-on, health outcomes including GP registration, making sure that clients are receiving all the correct benefits and looking for work where appropriate, and a number of outcomes that clients choose from a list that includes managing money, stopping offending and managing substance abuse.

However, staff also report outcomes such as a visible impact on residents' lives, through the fact that staff are willing to listen to and spend time with them. One client arrived very resentful of what life had thrown at him and blaming others for his circumstances. After a lot of support from his key worker and chaplaincy staff, there was a turnaround in his attitude: while he still had dark moments, he became more positive and able to relate to others, and that helped him to move on successfully to accommodation.

[www.salvationarmy.org.uk/homelessness-section](http://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/homelessness-section)

## Caritas Anchor House

Caritas Anchor House is a residential and life skills centre, providing single homeless men and women with the support they need to live independently. Based in the London Borough of Newham, the charity aims to address the root causes of homelessness and create sustainable solutions for those affected. Caritas Anchor House is a member of the Caritas Social Action Network (CSAN), the social action arm of the Catholic Church in England and Wales.

The work focuses on personalised support, with each resident being given the training and help they need to fulfil their goals. By addressing material, emotional and spiritual needs, and offering life experiences, Caritas Anchor House aims to help residents find meaning and fulfilment. This sense of purpose, in turn, helps residents to make changes in their lives so that they can participate in society, get a job and live independently.

Caritas Anchor House offers four key services: accommodation and support for the homeless, a local community centre, a therapeutic centre and a rough sleeping assessment hub. The centre has 119 beds and serves over 230 people per year. Residents pay rent for their accommodation if they are employed; otherwise it is paid for via their housing benefit.



Picture: Caritas Anchor House



Picture: Caritas Anchor House

Residents are referred to Caritas Anchor House by the local authority, probation services or other homelessness services. On arrival, every resident is assigned a key worker, or 'Lifestyle Architect', with whom they complete needs assessments. This helps residents to identify areas in their lives that they need to address through their personal development plan, and includes topics such as health, self-care, social relationships and money management. During their stay, residents take part in training and other courses designed to develop skills and build confidence. These include cookery classes, money management courses in partnership with Quaker Social Action, IT training and practical workshops for those looking for employment. A DWP outreach worker holds weekly job clubs.

Caritas Anchor House also offers activities to promote physical, emotional and mental wellbeing. Each resident is signed up with a GP, there is a weekly nurse's surgery on site and regular TB screenings are held by an NHS Mobile X-Ray Unit. There are also sports and art classes, as well as relaxation and meditation sessions. To promote healthy mental wellbeing, residents are given the opportunity to attend a retreat focusing on self-reflection. Statutory services offer support with areas such as mental health, and a specialist complex needs team supports those in recovery from drug and alcohol addiction, working in partnership with alcohol and substance misuse agencies. Alcoholics Anonymous and Cocaine Anonymous meetings are also held on site.

Social and community activities are encouraged and a volunteering time-bank is in place to help residents spend their time constructively and gain valuable

employment experience. The ethos of volunteering, combined with a policy of recruiting residents as staff members, means that 20% of the 54 staff are former residents.

The average stay at Caritas Anchor House is 14 months, although this is rising – due, the charity says, to cuts in other services. Residents primarily move on to the private rented sector, but the centre has a good relationship with a number of landlords and has negotiated the use of 10 flats per year from the local authority.

Caritas Anchor House works with a number of partners, including: Business in the Community, which helps arrange work placements in major companies; Pret-A-Manger, which offers pre-job interview training; Clifford Chance solicitors, which provides professional mentors offering literacy support; FareShare, a charity that redistributes surplus food; and Khulisa, a crime reduction charity that runs a behaviour awareness programme.

The centre uses the Outcomes Star™ to measure residents' progress and collects other impact data. For example, in 2014: 71 residents moved into independent living; 63 residents took up employment; and 80% of residents registered with a GP. A Social Return on Investment exercise, undertaken by Oxford Economics,<sup>16</sup> found that Caritas Anchor House provides a return to society of £3.98 for every £1 invested in the centre. This primarily comes from cost savings due to lower crime, more employment and hosting Alcoholics Anonymous. The project estimates it has reduced Accident and Emergency admissions among its residents by 75% over four years.

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

<sup>16</sup> Oxford Economics (2011) *An SROI analysis of Anchor House, October 2011*. Oxford: Oxford Economics [caritasanchorhouse.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/Final-version-of-report-for-Anchor-House-sent-4-October-2011.pdf](http://caritasanchorhouse.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/Final-version-of-report-for-Anchor-House-sent-4-October-2011.pdf)



## FURTHER INFORMATION

Some suggestions for further reading and organisations to contact - this is not an exhaustive list.

### CHAIN

Combined Homelessness and Information Network, a multi-agency database on street homelessness in London.

[www.mungosbroadway.org.uk/chain](http://www.mungosbroadway.org.uk/chain)

### Find&Treat

An NHS service based in London, Find&Treat is a specialist outreach team working to tackle TB among homeless people, drug or alcohol users, vulnerable migrants and people who have been in prison. The team includes former TB patients who work as peer advocates, TB nurse specialists, social and outreach workers, radiographers and expert technicians. They work in the community from a specialist van, finding cases of active TB early and supporting patients to take a full course of treatment and get cured.

[www.uclh.nhs.uk/OurServices/ServiceA-Z/HTD/Pages/MXU.aspx](http://www.uclh.nhs.uk/OurServices/ServiceA-Z/HTD/Pages/MXU.aspx)

### Homeless Link

Membership body for organisations working with homeless people in England. Provides information, guidance, training, research and statistics, and access to Outcomes Star™ for measuring service users' progress and organisational success.

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

### Homeless UK / Homeless London

Information sites from Homeless Link. The UK site provides information on over 9,000 services, including hostels, day centres and advice and support services for homeless people and those at risk of homelessness.

[www.homelessuk.org](http://www.homelessuk.org) and [www.homelesslondon.org](http://www.homelesslondon.org)

### Housing Justice

The charity's work includes:

#### Christian Homeless Forum

A forum for Christians involved in action on homelessness, centred on practice, policy and prayer. It meets in London on the third Thursday of the month and all who share a concern about homelessness from a Christian perspective are welcome.

For more info contact Alastair at [a.murray@housingjustice.org.uk](mailto:a.murray@housingjustice.org.uk).

#### Birmingham Christian Homeless Forum

Chaired by Rev Neil Johnson of Birmingham Methodist Circuit.

For details contact Emma Neil at [e.neill@housingjustice.org.uk](mailto:e.neill@housingjustice.org.uk)

#### Housing Justice Shelter Quality Mark

A standard of excellence, with advice, support, training and resources, for groups running night shelters.

[www.housingjustice.org.uk/pages/housing-justice-church-night-shelter-franchise.html](http://www.housingjustice.org.uk/pages/housing-justice-church-night-shelter-franchise.html)



Picture: Midland Langar Seva Society

## Local Solutions to the Housing Crisis

A toolkit with ideas and guidance for those wanting to take local action.

[www.housingjustice.org.uk/pages/local-solutions-to-the-housing-crisis.html](http://www.housingjustice.org.uk/pages/local-solutions-to-the-housing-crisis.html)

## Lost and Found: Faith and spirituality in the lives of homeless people

A report that first looks at the benefits of faith for homeless people, and then draws insight from 75 qualitative interviews with homeless people.

Gravell, C. (2013) *Lost and Found: Faith and spirituality in the lives of homeless people*. London: Lemos & Crane

[www.housingjustice.org.uk/data/files/publications/LostandFound.pdf](http://www.housingjustice.org.uk/data/files/publications/LostandFound.pdf)

## The Role of Faith-Based Organisations in the Provision of Services for Homeless

Research by the University of York based on a qualitative study of 25 homelessness services, reflecting on the 'difference that faith makes' to the way services are delivered and experienced.

Johnsen, S. and Fitzpatrick, S. (2009) *The Role of Faith-Based Organisations in the Provision of Services for Homeless People*. York: Centre for Housing Policy.

[www.york.ac.uk/chp/expertise/homelessness/publications-presentations](http://www.york.ac.uk/chp/expertise/homelessness/publications-presentations)

## Soup runs

For directories of 'soup runs', many of which are faith-based, see:

[streetskitchen.co.uk](http://streetskitchen.co.uk), [www.thepavement.org.uk/services.php](http://www.thepavement.org.uk/services.php) and [www.housingjustice.org.uk/pages/soup-runs.html](http://www.housingjustice.org.uk/pages/soup-runs.html)

## Impact measurement

Sources of support include:

- Charities Evaluation Services  
[www.ces-vol.org.uk](http://www.ces-vol.org.uk)
- HACT (Housing Associations' Charitable Trust)  
[www.hact.org.uk](http://www.hact.org.uk)
- Homeless Link:  
[www.homeless.org.uk/our-work/resources/show-your-impact](http://www.homeless.org.uk/our-work/resources/show-your-impact)
- Inspiring Impact programme,  
[www.inspiringimpact.org](http://www.inspiringimpact.org)
- new economics foundation  
[www.neweconomics.org](http://www.neweconomics.org)  
In particular see: Michaelson, J., Mahony, S. and Schifferes, J. (2012) *Measuring Wellbeing: A guide for practitioners*. London: new economics foundation  
[www.neweconomics.org/publications/entry/measuring-well-being](http://www.neweconomics.org/publications/entry/measuring-well-being)
- New Philanthropy Capital (NPC)  
[www.thinknpc.org](http://www.thinknpc.org)

FaithAction also provides resources and training to help faith groups evidence their work.

Contact: [info@faithaction.net](mailto:info@faithaction.net) or 0845 094 6350.



# THE FAITH COVENANT



All Party Parliamentary Group for  
**Faith and Society**

This report highlights examples of where faith-based organisations are working alongside statutory services, and in some cases are being commissioned by local authorities. This is vital, because the coming decade will see the country facing new social needs and tough new challenges. There will be fresh demands on public health, social care, education, employment support and community inclusion. These challenges will require the identification of a new set of resources. We will need to unlock the potential of every part of our society to contribute towards solutions.

The All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Faith and Society, for which FaithAction is the secretariat, believes that one important resource can be realised by supporting faith-based organisations to work with local authorities constructively and effectively, as part of civil society. That will mean ensuring that local authorities

are confident in commissioning services from, and transferring assets to, appropriately qualified faith-based organisations, and that they include faith groups when they look for solutions to social needs.

The APPG is convinced that faith groups have a great deal to offer as providers and advocates for the communities in which they serve, and that some of their potential is being unnecessarily overlooked at present.

To help tackle the problem, the Group has drafted a Covenant which can be adopted by faith groups and local authorities in cities across the UK. The Covenant is a joint commitment between faith communities and local authorities to a set of principles that guide engagement, aiming to remove some of the mistrust that exists and to promote open, practical working on all levels. Together, local authorities and faith communities should work out their own version of the commitments, according to local priorities and needs.

Read more at [www.faihandociety.org/covenant](http://www.faihandociety.org/covenant)

Contact [info@faithaction.net](mailto:info@faithaction.net) or call 0845 094 6350

## FRIENDLY PLACES



Faith groups and faith-based organisations have the capacity to be places of support for those struggling with their mental health or wellbeing – issues which often overlap with homelessness. Faith groups can do this by being intentional about their role

as places of connection, support and acceptance, and by signposting people in need to professional services.

FaithAction has developed the Friendly Places Pledge that organisations can sign to demonstrate their commitment:

*I believe that there is a significant and positive role for faith communities to play in the support of mental health.*

*I pledge to support faith groups in my community to become Friendly Places which welcome and support those struggling with their mental health.*

Read more and sign the pledge online at [www.faihandociety.net/friendlyplaces](http://www.faihandociety.net/friendlyplaces), where you can also find articles, tips and other resources to help your faith group make practical and positive steps towards becoming more mental health friendly.



**Because faith reaches the parts that nothing else can**

**[www.faithaction.net](http://www.faithaction.net)**