

EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION AT THE CONNECTION 2019-20

THE BIG IDEA

The Connection at St Martin's works with rough sleepers and homeless people in Westminster, London. We provide immediate relief through shelter, food, showers and laundry, as well as long-term specialist support which empowers people to gain the necessary skills and confidence to make lasting life changes. Over recent years we've seen a significant increase in the numbers of rough sleepers both in London and across the UK. To help meet this demand, last year we increased the number of beds in our Emergency Accommodation from 45 to 75.

WHY DO WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT?

Street homelessness continues to rise in the UK, with rates roughly tripling since 2010. Estimates suggest that 1 in 15 rough sleepers in England are found in Westminster, where our services are based, and latest figures suggest that in London as a whole there's been an astonishing 16% increase from the previous year.

Sleeping rough is not only frightening; it's demoralising, isolating and dangerous. The life expectancy of a rough sleeper is just 47 as opposed to 77 for the general population, and they are 13 times more likely to be a victim of violence. The longer someone stays on the streets, the more likely they are to develop health and addiction problems.

HOW WILL WE SOLVE THE PROBLEM?

Every evening we open our doors to a long queue of people waiting to be welcomed into the warmth and safety of our Emergency Accommodation service. We provide potentially life-saving shelter for up to 75 people every night who would otherwise be sleeping rough. People have access to a hot evening meal, breakfast, showers, computers, an overnight laundry service and experienced staff who offer emotional support.

Crucially, the informal, safe and secure environment alongside the fact that clients also tend to be more relaxed because they're not worrying about where they're going to sleep and how cold it's going to be, enables staff to engage more easily with clients. It makes all the difference in clients opening up, facilitating honest and productive conversations - often over a cup of tea - resulting in staff being able to direct clients (via key workers in the Day Centre) to specific and specialist services. These services include legal, welfare and benefits advice, housing and resettlement services, access to training, education and jobs and support for addiction and mental health problems. We also deliver various support groups (e.g. gambling, anger management) and other social and skills-related activities (e.g. arts & crafts, digital skills, a book club), including a popular in-house client volunteering scheme.



For those used to isolation and exclusion, these initial interactions with the Emergency Accommodation staff are key in building confidence to then begin making longer term life changes.

HOW YOUR SUPPORT WILL MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

The most immediate impact of our Emergency Accommodation is that it reduces the number of rough sleepers in Westminster, which can be potentially life-saving.

Longer term, it plays a key role in the process of identifying and addressing complex client needs. The informal environment enables staff to engage more easily with clients. This helps build trust and confidence with staff in the day centre, when they are able to seek specialist support, for housing, employment or for mental health problems.



If we hit our target of £25,000, this will provide the equivalent of 625 night stays. One night stay includes the running costs of providing shelter, phones, showers, laundry services, a hot evening meal and breakfast the next day, and comes to £40. With the support of the funds from The Big Give campaign we hope to use the funds to continue providing this vital, and potentially life-saving service.

IN RETURN FOR YOUR SUPPORT

If you feel that you are able to support this project you will receive bi-annual updates from us and be invited in to visit our centre, and to meet some of the beneficiaries.

If you are able to make a pledge, please [PLEDGE HERE](#)

The deadline for pledges is 5pm Friday 30th August 2019.