

TOGETHER IN PRAYER

October - December 2018

Homelessness



**TOGETHER
NETWORK** 

Homelessness is a serious and growing issue. The statistics are staggering: one in ten people in England say that they have personally experienced homelessness and the number of people sleeping rough in London alone has doubled in the last five years.

This prayer diary explores how our development workers are tackle homelessness on the ground, with suggestions of how you can support them in prayer.



Thank you. It is so encouraging to know that people are praying for what we are involved with.



Anna, Development Worker in Norfolk

AS WINTER APPROACHES PLEASE PRAY:

- For those experiencing homelessness, whether they are sleeping rough, staying in night shelters, living in temporary accommodation, staying with family/friends, sofa-surfing or sleeping in their cars. Pray that they are kept safe, and give them hope that their situation will improve.
- For those whose lives are being turned upside down as they lose a permanent place to sleep each night because of ill health, insecure housing, relationship breakdown, loss of jobs or changes in the benefit system.
- For wisdom for local authorities and central government as they respond to the housing and health needs in our country this winter.
- For compassion, safety and strength for our development workers and all those working, day and night, to try to meet some of the needs of those who find themselves without a home.
- For the many night shelters beginning to set up for the winter. Pray that there are enough warm and safe beds so that no-one has to sleep rough on the streets. Pray for all those helping in the shelters; pray for wisdom, patience and tenacity so that warm and generous hospitality is offered to every person who comes to sit, eat and sleep in the shelters.

CANTERBURY



Our partnership in Canterbury is working with two homeless charities, local authorities and a prison to support ex-offenders who are released into street homelessness. The aim is to provide somewhere that they can stay whilst receiving the support they need to make a successful transition to an independent tenancy. Pray that the local community will embrace the project and provide the support that the tenants need. Together Canterbury is working with all the Winter Night Shelters in Kent to ensure that the shelters are available when needed, that volunteers are properly trained and supported and that feedback on the true picture of street homelessness reaches those with the power to affect real change. Pray for those in positions of power to have open hearts.



MIDDLESBROUGH

Together Middlesbrough and Cleveland are part of the Positive Pathways project, which works to provide one-to-one support to people experiencing homelessness, often with complications of chronic substance abuse and mental health issues. A team of staff and volunteers are slowly gaining the trust they need to help restore dignity into these people's lives, beginning the journey towards improved life choices. Pray for patience in these relationships, and energy for all the staff and volunteers.



PLYMOUTH

Transforming Plymouth Together are helping to collate and communicate all of the free meal venues in the city, so that those who need them are better able to access them. They are also exploring with local churches the possibility of opening a number of night shelters. Pray that conversations are fruitful.

WANT TO TAKE ACTION?

**THE ADVENT
SLEEPOUT
CHALLENGE**

The Advent Sleepout Challenge is a national, sponsored event to help homeless people in England transform their lives and communities through the work of the Together Network.

Find out more at www.sleepoutchallenge.org.uk



**Then you will call on
me and come and
pray to me, and I will
listen to you.**

Jeremiah 29:12

LONDON



Our partnership in the London diocese, Capital Mass are supporting over 40 London churches and community groups That will be running winter night shelters in the city this winter. Pray for the churches and all the volunteers: for love, wisdom and grace as they build relationships and seek to welcome and support guests.

LANCASHIRE



Together Lancashire is beginning a project with the aim of finding a home for every refugee and asylum seeker in Lancashire, which will involve running a hosting scheme and helping people into quality private rental accommodation. Pray that more people are moved to host asylum seekers and refugees in their homes, and that the right partners and funding are found.



THE BLACK COUNTRY

Our partnership, Transforming Communities Together have been appointed Secretary of the Homelessness Forum, which is working with the City of Wolverhampton Council on their rough sleepers plan and their implementation of 'Housing First'. Pray that relationship building and the vision are key focuses. Transforming Communities Together are also running awareness sessions in Walsall on the targeting of homeless people by traffickers for modern slavery. Pray that these sessions will have a lasting impact.

4751

4,751 people are estimated to be sleeping rough on any one night in England.

30

The life expectancy of rough sleepers is 30 years shorter than for the rest of the population.

39%

The North West saw the biggest percentage increase in rough sleeping since last year.

169%

The increase in homelessness since 2010.

PHIL'S* EXPERIENCE

I'm one of the guys that ended up in homelessness. We're all homeless for different reasons. It's a shock, you know, it was a shock to me to end up in this situation. I was lucky to survive today to see tomorrow, you know. But a lot of the homelessness I find is because of benefits and rent problems because things are increasing too quickly, and benefits aren't increasing. As soon as you hit that situation it's 'survive survive survive'. 'Let's just keep going. Keep warm, keep going.'

If you're homeless you'll eat anywhere even if it's cold. I've done it, I've cracked a tin open and I'll eat it cold straight out of the tin and that's survival. That's when it gets really bad, you know. When you're homeless there's nowhere to go and relax. This is 24 hours. So you're either on your feet or you're freezing. At this time of the year you're cold. People don't see that though. They just see you're homeless one day and you're homeless the next but what they don't see is that life's not helping them anymore. They're just falling away. You got to remember it's a big hit, being homeless. It's made me see that I don't want to get into that position again.

* Name changed



MANCHESTER

Greater Together Manchester runs the GTM Night Shelter, bringing together communities and churches across Manchester and Salford to offer shelter and support to men who would otherwise be sleeping rough. The shelters are likely to support at least 50 individuals this winter, offering them a safe place to sleep, a warm meal and activities. Pray for the staff and volunteers ensuring that the shelter can open each night between October and April, and for the churches and community groups who generously give use of their buildings. Pray that the guests will find a way to rebuild their lives and leave behind homelessness and the challenges that come with this. Pray also for the work of GTM's partners who support the guests during the day, helping them find work and long term accommodation. GTM is also supporting a new night shelter project in Oldham, which is planning to launch in January. Pray for all the logistics of the new project and that those who are in need of shelter in the area will find their way to the warmth and safety of this new shelter.

NOTTINGHAM



Transforming Notts Together are engaged in the Nottingham City Homelessness Strategy. Pray that it would have a positive impact on the daily lives of those experiencing homelessness in the city. Pray also for an increase in good private landlords who are willing to rent to those on benefits, to prevent more people from being unable to find a suitable home.

LEICESTER



Our partnership Together Leicester, along with the Diocese, City Council and other organisations are joining forces to develop a Charter to tackle homelessness. It aims to establish principles and values which will enable people and organisations to work together better, trying to prevent homelessness from happening as well as providing more support for those affected by it. Pray that the Charter is well received at its launch event at the end of October, that people will be moved to action and pledge their support, and that this will be a catalyst for preventing homelessness in the city.



WARWICK

Transforming Communities Together Warwick is supporting churches as they respond to the relatively new and increasing issue of homelessness in Warwick. Pray for the churches to have wisdom in how they respond and that the right partnerships will open up so that they are able to help in the most effective way.

NORFOLK



Imagine Norfolk Together run The Living Room winter night shelter, which uses church buildings to provide a safe, warm overnight space for rough sleepers in Great Yarmouth over the winter months. Pray for safety, community and long-lasting benefit for all involved. Pray particularly for the project co-ordinator; for wisdom as she works with the homeless visitors both within The Living Room shelter and throughout the week.

Here's some of what the Together Network did to tackle homelessness in 2017:

4,300

Supplied 4,300 bed spaces.

20

Engaged 20 churches and other venues to respond.

19,000

Amazing volunteers supported the work by giving over 19,000 hours.

Lord God, Father of all, we pray that we, your children, would stretch out our hands to help our sisters and brothers who find themselves vulnerable, cold and confused on the streets of our towns and cities this winter.

Lord God, Son of God, you laid down your life in compassion for all, we pray that your compassion and love would seep through the night shelters and the day centres this winter.

Lord God, Holy Spirit, we pray that you will give wisdom, generosity and gentleness to all those seeking to ensure that no-one is without a place of warmth and security to live, particularly in the coldest months of the year.

We kneel before your throne of grace, love and justice and we ask that you give us eyes to see and ears to hear that we might be your hands and your feet right in the middle of our communities. Give us the belief that lives can be changed and the faith to trust that together we can change the communities where we live so that next winter no-one will be sleeping out in the cold.

A prayer written by Diane Watts, a Development Worker in Sussex



Your gift can turn the despair of homelessness into real hope
for the future, make your gift today at [cuf.org.uk](https://www.cuf.org.uk)

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