



Church Urban Fund

The Foundry, 17 Oval Way
London SE11 5RR

0203 752 5655

hello@cuf.org.uk

www.cuf.org.uk/easter

f **ig** **@ChurchUrbanFund**

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charity in England and Wales (297483)
A company limited by guarantee
(02138994)

 Printed on recycled paper

Patron: His Majesty King Charles III
April 2025



Contents

Welcome	1
Equipping churches with evidence for action	2
Helping churches reach into communities	4
Creating inclusive and supportive spaces	6
Headline news	8
Bringing people together to build strong communities	12
Expanding collaboration and impact	14
Supporting church leadership and resourcing	16
No child left behind	18
Breaking the cycle of homelessness	20
Building financial sustainability to meet urgent needs	22
Looking ahead	24
Look Up Tool explained	25

Welcome



Following many months of stakeholder engagement, in 2024 we made a firm commitment to partnership work aimed at ending poverty and challenging the unjust structures of society. This, we believe, is an imperative that comes from Jesus Christ, which we embed in an inclusive and holistic way, working with people of all faiths and none for the sake of the flourishing of all.

In our impact report, you will witness powerful stories of transformation and examples of how churches and faith communities are responding to real needs with compassion and innovation, bearing testimony to this commitment.

It is essential that these stories are shared, as they highlight the realities of poverty and inequality while demonstrating the power of churches and faith groups to drive change. By working alongside local communities, CUF champions social action rooted in understanding, collaboration and faith, shaped in the principles of asset based community development.

This year, we deepened our partnerships with key stakeholders in the third sector across civil society. This includes diverse Christian denominations (including the Church of England) and network organisations. We have also continued to build partnerships with local and national government. We continue to advocate for the vital work happening in communities, ensuring that faith remains a powerful voice in addressing societal challenges.

One of our key achievements last year was the relaunch of our hugely popular Look Up Tool, which helps churches, individuals and institutions gain deeper insights into their communities, better understand local

demographics, and identify key social challenges such as poverty, housing, and education. Strong groundwork is essential when planning mission and outreach, and the Look Up Tool plays a vital role in shaping effective responses, and often leads to further work using our Growing Good resources, and more in depth work through 'Know your church, know your neighbourhood'.

Internally, with staff and trustees, we have focussed on simplifying our governance, policies and procedures, including an independent audit on our safeguarding policy and procedures. This, we hope, will enable our support of churches, faith groups, and communities to be more robust, agile and effective as we respond to need.

Externally, we have spent time listening to churches, dioceses and partners to understand how CUF can best serve them in supporting some of our most deprived communities. These conversations have shaped our new strategy, set to launch in 2025, alongside refreshed vision, mission statements and values that will clearly define who we are and what we seek to achieve.

By ensuring our foundations are strong, we work alongside churches and community groups across England to make our neighbourhoods better places to thrive. Looking ahead, we remain committed to walking alongside, co-producing resources through lived experience and equipping with tools, knowledge, and resources that are needed to make a lasting impact across the many diverse communities.

The Right Reverend Rob Wickham
Group Chief Executive Officer

EQUIPPING CHURCHES WITH EVIDENCE FOR ACTION

The Look Up Tool: a critical resource for local mission

The Look Up Tool was relaunched in 2024 to help churches better understand their communities by providing insights into local demographics and key social challenges such as poverty, housing, and education.

With around 12,500 parishes in the Church of England, each serves a unique and diverse community. Every parish has its own tapestry of people, gifts, and challenges that shape its local culture. The Look Up Tool helps churches develop a clearer picture of these realities, ensuring their mission and outreach efforts are informed and effective.

Mission is often described as “finding out what God is doing and joining in.”¹ This tool helps churches discern both the treasures within their community and the challenges that must be met with faith, service, and partnership.



Church On The Corner

The leadership team at Church On The Corner in North London used the Look Up Tool to gain a deeper understanding of their local community and plan their mission accordingly.

“

The resources helped us identify specific socio-economic and wealth needs in the community. We were aware of the wealth inequality in our area but this experience was an opportunity to drill down into specific issues which can be associated. We considered poor mental health, child deprivation and single-parent families when identifying needs in this area.”

Church On The Corner went on to use the Growing Good Tool to develop their plans and take practical action: “Even at a time when we didn’t have considerable resources, we were able to look at what we did have and open our doors.”

1. John V. Taylor, The Go-Between God

WHO IS USING THE TOOL, AND WHY? 1 Sep – 31 Dec24

Total registrants **1,577**

31% planning for mission

Church denomination
86% Anglican

Job titles: Vicar **12%**
Curate **6%** Rector **4%**

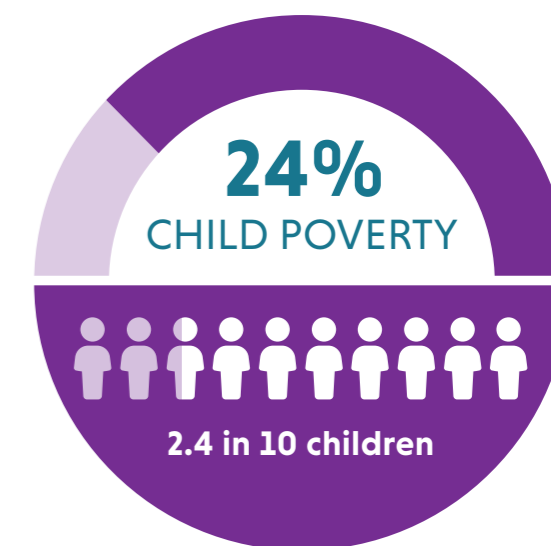


Key improvements and impact

- **1,577** people accessed the Look Up Tool to guide their outreach efforts after its relaunch, and over **6,500** in total used it in 2024.
- Enhanced usability with new interactive features, allowing parishes to compare data with diocesan and national trends.
- Improved data insights to help churches identify and address specific community needs such as housing instability and food poverty.
- More intuitive navigation, making it easier for churches to analyse key social indicators and shape their outreach initiatives.

But the Look Up Tool is just the starting point. Through our other resources like Growing Good, churches can explore how their mission can be shaped to respond to local issues in a meaningful, targeted, and effective way.

By renewing and strengthening the Look Up Tool, CUF reaffirms its commitment to supporting churches in building strong, resilient communities. As we look ahead, we are excited to see how churches continue to use this resource to shine a light on local needs and bring hope and transformation to the places they serve.



Church On The Corner parish, Barnsbury, ranks 2,626th most deprived in England (out of 12,239)

HELPING CHURCHES REACH INTO COMMUNITIES

Since its launch in 2021, Growing Good has equipped churches with practical tools to integrate social action, discipleship, and church growth. In 2024, we expanded these resources to make them more accessible and relevant to churches of all sizes and traditions.

Churches continue to respond positively to the resources:

- **79%** reported greater awareness of local needs.
- **80%** became more aware of community strengths.
- **68%** felt more confident in sharing their faith through social action.
- **92%** took action, including launching new outreach projects and forming partnerships.

By combining biblical reflection and practical application, Growing Good empowers churches to respond effectively to community needs while strengthening faith and discipleship.



GROWING GOOD

1,900
people signed up
(since launch)



600+
churches using
the resources
(since launch)



120
people
attended
workshops



Christchurch Three Mills

Growing Good and the power of listening

At Christchurch Three Mills in East London, Growing Good inspired a renewed commitment to listening.

Reverend Dan Scott shares:



We found it incredibly encouraging to hear the stories of others who were just doing simple things to connect with their community and to connect their community to faith. The way the course didn't overemphasise one or the other between social action and evangelism was really powerful. It actually said we can be people who care for our communities as a whole. What that course did was inspire voices that maybe otherwise wouldn't have been heard."

"Out of that course also came a deeper desire to listen to our community. And so, because we ran the Growing Good course over Lent, by Easter we had taken steps to act on that learning."



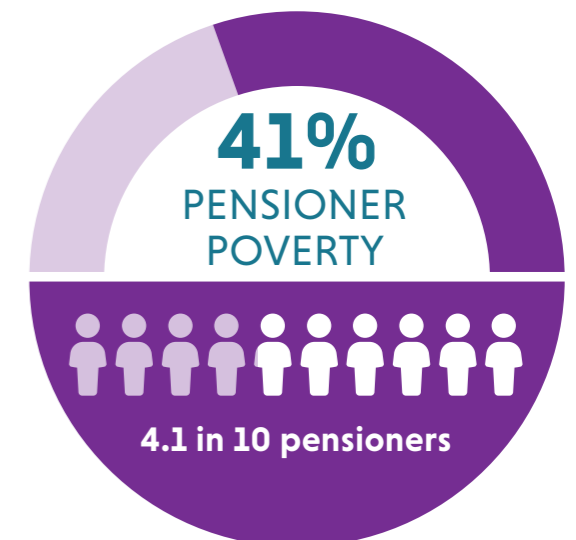
Improving accessibility and impact

To ensure Growing Good reaches a wider audience, we have:

- Developed specialised content for smaller congregations and rural churches.
- Introduced new training resources tailored to different church traditions.
- Provided training through webinars and events, equipping churches with tools to implement Growing Good in their contexts.

Through Growing Good, churches across England are discovering new ways to grow in knowledge, confidence and connection, strengthening communities and transforming lives.

growing-good.org.uk/



Christchurch Three Mills parish, Stratford, ranks 1,590th most deprived parish in England (out of 12,239)

IMPACT

821 venues



140 new venues opened



Estimated 22,167 people reached weekly



4,105 volunteers mobilised



Expanding impact through partnerships

In 2024, Places of Welcome celebrated 10 years of providing safe, welcoming spaces, growing to 821 locations and reaching 22,167 people with the support of 4,105 volunteers. Strong partnerships with churches, charities, and local services have been key to expanding the network and deepening its impact.

Places of Welcome uphold the 5 Ps – Place, People, Presence, Provision, and Participation – ensuring venues remain accessible and community-driven. New venues, including St. Ambrose Barlow Catholic Church in Birmingham, launched community cafés and hubs in response to local needs.

“Inclusivity is at the heart of what we do,” says coordinator Hayley-Charlotte Haughton. “Simple things like fresh fruit on tables or a community library remove barriers and create a welcoming space.”

Strengthening partnerships for greater impact

- **Social Prescribing:** New resources were developed to help Places of Welcome connect with healthcare professionals, ensuring people in need are signposted to supportive spaces.
- **Community collaboration:** Venues built partnerships with businesses, charities, and councils to offer activities like craft sessions, food provision, and family events.
- **Supporting local democracy:** Ahead of the UK General Election, Places of Welcome distributed voter registration guidance to help visitors access information.

placesofwelcome.org.uk



MALE LIFE EXPECTANCY
10 years earlier than the highest in the nation

Holbrook Heart Café

A place to belong

At St Mark’s Church in Holbrook, community and connection are at the heart of everything they do. Holbrook Heart Café isn’t just for church members, it’s truly a community space. By partnering with local GP surgeries and social prescribing networks, the café has welcomed people looking for friendship, support, and a place to belong. The nearby care home also brings residents along when possible, ensuring no one is left out.

“

We’ve heard time and again that people are looking for spaces where they can feel welcome, without pressure

St. Marks parish ranks 11,812th most deprived parish in England (out of 12,239)

or judgment,” Jo, Senior Administrator at St Mark’s shares. “People often ask, ‘We’re not part of the church, can we still come in?’ The answer is always yes. This café is open to all.” Beyond coffee and conversation, the café meets practical needs too. A clothes and toy exchange has been set up, helping families in need while fostering a culture of sharing and generosity.

OUR FACTS AND FIGURES IN 2024

Look Up Tool

(1 Sep – 31 Dec 24)



Total registrants: **1,577**

Prompted to use: **31%**
planning for mission

Church denomination:
86% Anglican



Job titles: Vicar **12%**
Curate **6%** Rector **4%**

Growing Good

1,900 people signed up
(since launch)

600+ churches using
the resources (since launch)

120 people attended
workshops



Riots Retreat

12 people attended
(9 clergy and lay leaders,
3 team members)

5 dioceses

Diocese of Liverpool

Diocese of Durham

Diocese of Manchester

Diocese of Guildford

Diocese of Chelmsford



Near Neighbours

49 small grants awarded
to the value of **£152,719**

In addition
42 micro grants of **£300-£500**
to Places of Welcome
to improve accessibility and
strengthen community
participation



Windrush Day Grant

£459,690 awarded
across **27** grant recipients

(including charities, community groups and councils)



with an average of **£17,026**
awarded per recipient

Near Neighbours

86 new partnerships
facilitated between local
organisations



1,733 of grassroots leaders
equipped with practical skills
and confidence to make
a bigger difference in their
neighbourhoods



802 of volunteers
mobilised through hub and
grant activities contributing
29,809 hours to their
communities

Places of Welcome

821 of registered venues

140 of new Places of
Welcome venues opened

Reaching **22,167**
people weekly (estimated)



Mobilising **4,105**
volunteers weekly

(Stats from Places of Welcome Impact Report)

Catalyst

88 young people
participated in 2024



4 courses with
5 project partners:

- Be Educated Yourself (Birmingham)
- Bradford Diocesan Academies Trust (BDAT, West Yorkshire)
- The Urswick School (East London)
- Oaklands School (East London)
- Central Foundation Girl's School (East London)

OUR FACTS AND FIGURES IN 2024

Catalyst

80% of participants reported that Catalyst had prepared them to take a more active leadership role in their communities



76% reported improved understanding of how to influence local decision making

69% reported the course had motivated them to volunteer in their communities

3 active Catalyst Alumni projects

1. £2k grant award to BEY Catalyst alumni to start the Soul Sanctuary, a youth group for Muslim teenagers that provides space for them to connect and contribute to the community through various initiatives.
2. £3k grant award to Belle Vue Girls School (BDAT) Catalyst alumni to commission two local artists to design a mural for the local sports centre that will represent and celebrate the diverse community.
3. £1k grant award to Oaklands School Catalyst alumni to support their work with a local residential home to start an intergenerational gardening project.

Together Network

14 core members



28 associate members

We ran seven webinars with a total of **202** attendees



Topics included holiday food provision, equality, supporting older people, ABCD for churches, prayer, responding to poverty with data, and generosity.

97% found the sessions helpful



41% said they would share what they'd heard with a church leader



Just Finance Foundation

154 new schools joined LifeSavers in 2024



93% of teachers agree LifeSavers supported them to provide students with life skills

41,377 children accessed LifeSavers for the first time



95% of teachers we work with are confident or highly confident in their ability to deliver financial education



Positive pathways 2

Partners and locations

DePaul Middlesbrough
Middlesbrough

Hope Housing Bradford

Archer Project (The Cathedral)
Sheffield

Shiloh Rotherham

Complex Lives Team Doncaster Council Doncaster

Wayfinder



67% saw improvements in emotional well-being

42% improved their long-term housing situation.

91% of participants found the mentor helpful (40% in year one)



Fundraising

Legacies worth **£177,150**

(8 new legacies for £170,558 plus previous legacies adjusted by £6,592)

80 churches donated **£33,033**

1,085 regular donors made gifts of **£231,933** (including Gift Aid)

£136,693 (including Gift Aid) from campaigns (£92,307 from specific campaigns, £44,386 general/unsolicited)

BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER TO BUILD STRONG COMMUNITIES



Near Neighbours grants

Near Neighbours supports grassroots initiatives that bring people together to foster inclusion and social cohesion. Grants, funded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities until July 2024) enable local leaders to break down barriers, tackle inequality, and build long-term relationships within their communities.

- **£152,718.90** awarded in 49 small grants, strengthening community relationships and fostering collaborative action.
- **86** new partnerships facilitated between local organisations

Places of Welcome micro-grants

Places of Welcome venues provide safe and hospitable spaces where people can connect, belong and get involved. Through Near Neighbours micro-grants, these venues were able to expand outreach and introduce new initiatives.

- **42 micro grants** of £300-£500 awarded to Places of Welcome venues to improve accessibility and strengthen community participation.

One project leader reflected:

“We extended our opening hours and now offer free lunches, helping to reach some of the most vulnerable people in our community.”

Finding Friendship at Cosy Café

“

I was out walking my dogs when two regulars invited me in,” Graham recalls. “They encouraged me to give it a try. So, I took my dogs home and have been coming back every week since!”

Having moved to the area just eight months earlier, Graham found a sense of belonging at Cosy Café. “I live alone, so I really look forward to coming here to chat with people from different backgrounds and hear their stories. The friendship and companionship keep me coming back.” Although he doesn’t rely on the free meal, Graham enjoys giving back by bringing coffee and donating to the Food Pantry and Sunday Supper run by the church.

“It feels good to contribute to something that helps the community. Coming to Cosy Café has helped me feel at home in this area. I’ve made good friends, and I’ll keep coming for as long as I can.”



Windrush Day Grant Scheme

The Windrush Day Grant Scheme, funded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, celebrates the contributions and legacy of the Windrush Generation, ensuring that their stories and impact continue to inspire future generations.

- **27** community projects received **£459,690** in funding, ranging from storytelling initiatives to cultural exhibitions, honouring the Windrush Generation’s place in our rich cultural heritage.
- Average of **£17,026 awarded per recipient**

One participant shared:

“This project deepened my understanding and appreciation of the Windrush Generation’s role in shaping modern Britain.”

near-neighbours.org.uk



St. Saviour parish, Nottingham, ranks 923rd most deprived parish in England (out of 12,239)

EXPANDING COLLABORATION AND IMPACT

Together Network

- 14 Core members
- 28 Associate members

Expanding collaboration and impact

The Together Network continues to grow, bringing together churches, Christian charities, and faith-based organisations to strengthen social action and community outreach. In 2024, the network grew significantly, welcoming 12 new Associate Members, including URC North West Synod, Acts 435, and Hope into Action. With 28 Associate Members and 14 Core Members, the network is a thriving hub for collaboration, knowledge sharing, and resource mobilisation.



A hub for learning and support

This year, the Together Network created more opportunities for members to connect, share knowledge, and develop practical skills to strengthen their impact.

Key activities included:

- **Collective wisdom sessions:** Members explored fundraising with the Benefact Trust and affordable housing with experts from Hope into Action and The Archbishop's Council Housing Project, gaining practical insights.
- **Workers' catch-ups:** Members met three times for peer support, updates, and shared learning.
- **Media and press training:** A session run by the Media Trust helped members build confidence in media engagement.
- **Annual residential gathering:** 50 members attended 'Persevering Together', focusing on social action challenges, government engagement, and well-being. Workshops covered funding, digital tools, and trusteeship, leaving participants inspired and equipped.
- **Steering group meetings:** Core Members met six times online to share updates, discuss network growth, and explore the impact of policy changes on local communities.

togethernetnetwork.org.uk

CUF's Together Network teams honoured in Lambeth Awards

In 2024, the impact of the Together Network was recognised through Lambeth Awards for two individuals whose work has transformed communities.

For Lily Axworthy, CEO of Greater Together Manchester, the award reflected the team effort behind tackling poverty and homelessness. Through projects like Wayfinder, which pairs individuals with volunteers to help secure stable accommodation, Lily's work has created long-term change.



“

This award isn't just for me – it's for every staff member and volunteer who goes above and beyond to support people in crisis,” she said.

Bishop Toby Howarth, Chair of Wellsprings Together, was recognised for interfaith collaboration through Near Neighbours in Leeds, bringing people of different faiths together to build trust and take action. “Our work is about bringing people together to transform communities, and I'm proud to see that recognised,” he shared.



Manchester Cathedral parish, Manchester, ranks 1,683rd most deprived parish in England (out of 12,239)

SUPPORTING CHURCH LEADERSHIP AND RESOURCING

Reflecting on the summer riots of 2024

In November 2024, CUF partnered with the Clergy Support Trust to host a retreat for clergy and lay leaders from communities affected by the summer riots. The unrest followed the tragic murders of three young girls in Southport, with tensions further inflamed by misinformation and anti-immigration rhetoric. Over 10 days, churches became lifelines in their communities, offering emergency support while navigating the fear and violence unfolding around them.

The retreat provided a rare space for church leaders to process their experiences, grief, and trauma, while reflecting on their role in rebuilding community trust.

“ This is the first time I’ve spoken aloud to anyone other than my vicar about my experience of the riots. I hadn’t acknowledged how deep the impact of the fear was. ”

Lay leader

Discussions highlighted the church’s unique role as a trusted community presence, while also revealing the emotional toll on leaders. Many expressed the need for greater pastoral support, clearer crisis guidance, and training in navigating misinformation and media engagement.



This was the view of the riots outside Southport mosque, taken from the tower of Holy Trinity Church

Photo courtesy of Fr Tom Carpenter, Holy Trinity



RIOTS RETREAT

12 people attended

9 clergy and lay leaders

3 team members



from **5** dioceses

1. Diocese of Liverpool, Southport
2. Diocese of Durham, Sunderland
3. Diocese of Manchester, Manchester
4. Diocese of Guildford, Aldershot
4. Diocese of Guildford, Farnborough
5. Diocese of Chelmsford, Walthamstow

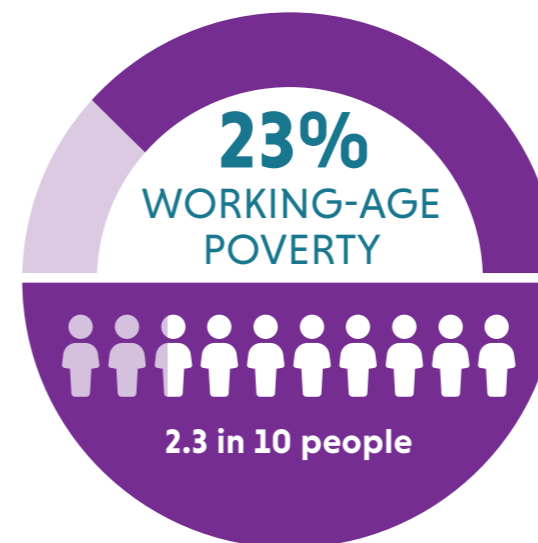
CUF Academy: equipping leaders for impact

In 2024 CUF launched the CUF Academy pilot programme, designed to equip Church of England clergy and lay leaders working in deprived communities. The Academy focuses on leadership development, resilience, and mission strategy, helping leaders develop knowledge, capacity, and practical skills for their ministry.

Participants engage in mentorship, peer learning, and practical theology, exploring three core strands:

- **Personal, and spiritual development:** Strengthening a prayerful deepening of individuals’ relationship with Jesus Christ, loved unconditionally.
- **Partnership:** Developing a practical theology of mission, which takes partnerships with many others, including local authorities and statutory services seriously.
- **Leadership development:** Recognising personal skills and strengthening self-awareness, resilience, and leadership skills for effective community engagement and team management.

As the Academy grows, it will continue to equip hundreds of church leaders with the skills, confidence, and support needed to serve communities facing complex challenges.



Holy Trinity parish, Southport, ranks 324th most deprived parish in England (out of 12,239)

Expanding financial education in schools

LifeSavers equips children with essential financial skills and confidence, helping them develop responsible money habits from an early age. In 2024, the reach of LifeSavers expanded, ensuring that more schools, including Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) settings, could access financial education tailored to their students' needs.

Enhancing accessibility and inclusion

To better support SEND learners, new interactive, hands-on resources were developed, addressing gaps in traditional financial education. These materials help students engage with money concepts in ways that match their needs, making financial learning inclusive and meaningful.

Schools have responded positively, especially in AP settings, where all surveyed teachers agreed that LifeSavers improved their confidence in delivering financial education. As resource pressures rise and financial stress grows for families, LifeSavers ensures no child is left behind in learning vital money skills.



KEY IMPACT AND PROGRESS

154 new
Lifesavers
schools



41,377 children
accessed
LifeSavers for
the first time



111,234
benefitted
from school
programmes

899
new teachers
trained



Preparing children for a financially secure future

For Emma Simpson, a primary school headteacher, financial education is essential, particularly in a school where many families face financial insecurity, homelessness, or temporary housing.



“ I think it’s really important that we recognise what skills children are actually going to need and be able to apply in the future. And obviously, finance is a massive part of that.”

Before LifeSavers, financial education was covered in maths lessons, but methods were outdated and teachers lacked confidence in delivering practical financial learning. “That side of it is almost a bit outdated because it’s about paying with coins and notes, and it doesn’t necessarily happen in that way anymore,” Emma explains. “Children won’t necessarily go to the shop and see parents paying for things with cash, so finance is quite an abstract concept to them because everything is paid for on a card or online.”

To make learning more tangible, the school introduced a break-time tuck shop, allowing children to handle money, make spending choices, receive change and recognise what’s good value.

Since introducing LifeSavers, teachers feel more confident, and financial education has become more practical and engaging. “It’s so valuable as a school to be able to access those resources,” Emma says. “We want to provide our children with high-quality learning opportunities.”

justfinancefoundation.org.uk/lifesavers

BREAKING THE CYCLE OF HOMELESSNESS



HOMELESSNESS DESTROYS SAFETY, WELLBEING, CONFIDENCE AND TRUST.

We believe that being fully welcomed into relationships with others can significantly reduce this risk. That's why personal care and community are at the heart of everything we do.

We equip local partners, churches and volunteers to help people facing homelessness develop the skills needed to live independently – now and in the future.

Wayfinder programme supporting people at risk of homelessness

Wayfinder provides mentorship and structured support for individuals facing homelessness or housing insecurity. Over the past year, it has adapted to meet the increasing complexity of participants' needs, combining volunteer mentorship with professional support for more effective intervention.



St. Mary's parish, Peterborough, ranks 845th most deprived parish in England (out of 12,239)

Key impact and progress

- **92%** of participants reported having more supportive people around them.
- **67%** saw improvements in emotional well-being.
- **42%** improved their long-term housing situation.
- **91%** of participants experienced the mentor as helpful.
- **58%** of participants had increased self-confidence.

Finding support and meaning

Danny was referred to Wayfinder by a food bank. Living with ADHD and a history of compulsive gambling, he struggled with social isolation and depression. Though previously homeless, he was now living with his partner but was not on the tenancy agreement.

Danny quickly formed a strong connection with his volunteer mentor, who helped him build self-awareness and process past trauma. The ability to share these experiences without judgment was an important step in his journey.

Recognising Danny's passion for art, Wayfinder provided supplies to encourage his creativity. While he continues to face challenges with gambling, his overall well-being has improved.

Becoming a voice for clients

Kim* was helped by a PP2 partner when she was sleeping rough. She felt she could be open about her experience and the partner linked her into a multi-agency approach. Through that, she managed to get a place in temporary accommodation and benefitted from drop-in sessions, and working one-to-one with a support worker. Kim is now exploring being a volunteer mentor, so she can become a voice for clients, and help them too.

* Name changed to protect privacy

Participants often arrive feeling isolated, unstable, and struggling with mental well-being. Many have struggled to access support elsewhere. By embedding Wayfinder within community hubs, delivery partners have strengthened collaboration with local services, charities, and housing teams, ensuring a holistic approach to both immediate and long-term needs.

Mentors play a key role by offering a listening ear, encouragement, and practical guidance. Participants report feeling respected, understood, and cared for, with the most significant improvements seen in confidence and resilience. Many experience greater stability in their lives, gaining the tools to navigate challenges and rebuild connections.

Positive Pathways 2 (PP2) Partners and locations

Middlesbrough	DePaul Middlesbrough
Bradford	Hope Housing
Sheffield	Archer Project (The Cathedral)
Rotherham	Shiloh
Doncaster	Complex Lives Team Doncaster Council

In 2023 Positive Pathways reached its fifth and final year delivering relational support to people experiencing homelessness across Yorkshire and Middlesbrough. In 2024 Positive Pathways 2 was launched with 5 of its original partners, projects who shared our vision of helping those clients ready to start that next stage in their journey.

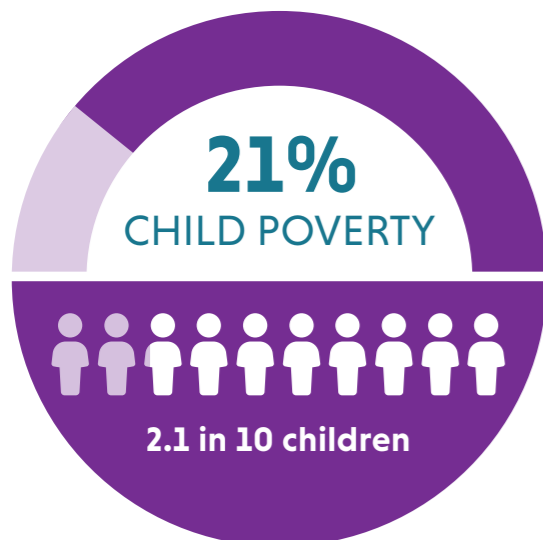
The project focuses on moving on, getting clients into housing and helping them stay there. Partners introduced a social enterprise element of the project, offering volunteering opportunities to their clients.

BUILDING FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY TO MEET URGENT NEEDS

Unrestricted funds allow CUF to respond quickly to urgent needs and long-term challenges, ensuring communities across the UK receive essential support when it matters most. The generosity of supporters, alongside fundraising initiatives, has been instrumental in sustaining our work.

Key impact and fundraising initiatives

- **Community-led fundraising:** Local groups and churches have raised substantial funds through sponsored events and campaigns.
- **Giving in wills:** More supporters are choosing to leave a legacy gift, ensuring future stability for CUF's initiatives.



St John the Baptist parish, Royston, ranks 1,678th most deprived parish in England (out of 12,239)



Photo courtesy of Bron Sims



From homelessness to community

Colin's journey

For 12 months, Colin lived in a tent on a golf course, struggling without hot food, stability or support after the loss of his father. Everything changed when Colin discovered a Place of Welcome at his local church.

“

It's welcoming, warm, and friendly. Everyone here is nice and there is always food for everyone," he says. Through the support of CUF initiatives, he found temporary housing and a community that valued him.

Determined to give back, Colin now volunteers, using his skills to support others. "They've helped me, so now I'm going to help them," he says. His story is a testament to the power of generosity and the life-changing impact of CUF's work. Every donation to CUF helps build stronger, more welcoming communities. With continued support, we can help more people like Colin find stability, purpose, and a place to belong.

Royston Rough Sleepers

Solidarity in action

For the past eight years, a dedicated group from Royston has braved the freezing winter nights to raise vital funds for CUF's homelessness initiatives. Their annual Advent Sleepout in a Hertfordshire churchyard has raised an incredible £40,000, offering vital support to those experiencing homelessness.

“

We wanted something that helped us act in solidarity with people forced to sleep rough," explains Andrew, one of the sleepout's organisers. "It's just one night for us, but for those experiencing homelessness, it's every night." The event has drawn widespread local support, with businesses, churches, and individuals contributing generously despite financial pressures.



LOOKING AHEAD: A FUTURE ROOTED IN HOPE AND ACTION

2025 marks 40 years since the publication of 'Faith in the City', a landmark report, rooted in the lived experience of 'Urban Priority Areas' commissioned by the then Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Robert Runcie. It highlighted the growing numbers of people being excluded due to poverty and lack of opportunity. One of its key recommendations was the creation of Church Urban Fund to strengthen the Church's presence and Christian witness in urban and deprived areas.

This anniversary is not just a moment to reflect, it is a call to recommit. Throughout 2025, CUF will renew its dedication to resourcing, strengthening, and empowering churches, ensuring they continue to be places of hope and transformation. In collaboration with partner organisations, we will commemorate this milestone while also critically assessing the changes of the past 40 years and discerning the Church's role in the years ahead.

Equipping churches and leaders

One of 'Faith in the City's' key recommendations was the training of clergy and lay leaders to serve in urban parishes, and fostering ministry partnerships. Responding to this, CUF welcomes its first Academy cohort in 2025 — a dedicated space for clergy and lay leaders to explore the distinctiveness of urban ministry. This initiative will provide practical support, training, and a collaborative environment to help churches flourish in their communities.

A core part of this work will be reinforcing the role of churches as community hubs — not only as places of worship but as key providers of social support. We will continue to strengthen engagement with local authorities, health services, and other agencies, ensuring churches are equipped to work in partnership to meet local needs effectively. Equally, we will encourage these organisations to better understand the impact faith groups have in their communities and how they can work together for positive change.

A new strategy for the future

As we approach CUF's own 40th anniversary in 2027, we will set out a new vision and strategy to guide our mission in the years ahead. Developed through extensive listening and consultation, this strategy will outline our priorities for supporting churches and communities in tackling poverty together. It will also establish a clear framework of values, ensuring our work remains rooted in partnership, faith in action, and a commitment to lasting social change.

The past 40 years have shown us that real transformation happens when communities, churches, and organisations come together with a shared purpose. As we move forward, CUF remains steadfast in its mission: walking alongside churches and communities, equipping them to change lives, and working towards a future where no one is left behind.

Look Up Tool data

The Look Up Tool data used in this report relates to particular local parishes, and provides a snapshot into their levels of deprivation. Where data for the exact location of a case study was not large enough to be statistically robust, a nearby central church was used to represent the area instead.

The Look Up Tool draws from three key data sources:

1. Index of Multiple Deprivation (2019)
2. Census data (2021)
3. Church of England Parish Boundaries (currently in the tool as of Oct 2023)

Please use the [links](#) to see the full data set for the parish, which includes measures of poverty, education, and social housing.

Page	Heading	Full Look Up Tool data	Parish, local name	Overall deprivation out of 12239, where 1 is the most deprived	Child poverty %	Working age poverty %	Pensioner poverty %	Life expectancy, male
3	Equipping churches with evidence for action: Church on the Corner	https://cuf.org.uk/parish/230116	St Andrew: Barnsbury	2626	0.24	0.15	0.27	78 years
5	Helping churches reach into communities: Christchurch Three Mills	https://cuf.org.uk/parish/580116	Stratford: St. John w Christ Church	1590	0.24	0.13	0.41	78 years
7	Creating inclusive and supportive spaces: Holbrook Heart Café	https://cuf.org.uk/parish/100572	Holbrook, St Mark	11812	0.06	0.05	0.06	83 years
13	Bringing people together to build strong communities: Finding friendship at Cosy Café	https://cuf.org.uk/parish/380302	Nottingham: St Saviour	923	0.32	0.21	0.32	76 years
14	Expanding collaboration and impact: Greater Manchester Together	https://cuf.org.uk/parish/240001	Manchester Cathedral	1,683	0.11	0.04	0.23	74 years
17	Supporting church leadership and resourcing: Riots retreat	https://cuf.org.uk/parish/220137	Southport: Holy Trinity	324	0.23	0.23	0.26	71 years
20	Breaking the cycle of homelessness: Finding support and meaning	https://cuf.org.uk/parish/280340	Peterborough St Mary	845	0.25	0.21	0.30	76 years
22	Building financial sustainability to meet urgent need: Royston Rough Sleepers	https://cuf.org.uk/parish/460369	Royston: St John the Baptist	1,678	0.21	0.16	0.17	80 years