


Newsletter
Spring 2024

NewHope

PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS.
TRANSFORMING LIVES.

RESTORE & RECOVER

A man and a woman are smiling and working together in a garden. The man, wearing a dark jacket and red gloves, is using a red-handled tool to plant a small green seedling into a raised garden bed. The woman, wearing a grey cardigan and glasses, is sitting next to him, watching and smiling. The garden bed is filled with dark soil and some other plants. In the background, there are lush green plants and a wooden fence.

“Cultivate activities are therapeutic. It’s calm and reflective and gives you a bond with other people that you wouldn’t normally get.”

INSIDE FIND OUT HOW TO HELP SOMEONE GAIN CONFIDENCE, SELF-WORTH AND IMPROVED WELLBEING AS THEY RECOVER FROM HOMELESSNESS.

Health and homelessness

A few years ago, I bumped into Leo (not his real name) slumped on the pavement against a wall on a narrow residential street off Vicarage Road.

Leo beckoned me over and told me that he had just discharged himself prematurely from hospital. I had known Leo for a number of years and was aware that he had an issue with drugs. But I was not prepared for what happened next. Leo pulled up the base of his trousers and showed me his lower leg, which was marked by a gaping wound. It was swollen, raw and greenish in appearance, suggesting it was infected as well. I knew that the desperate condition of Leo's leg was down to his many years of drug use.

I recently had the privilege of attending a conference in London about health and homelessness. It had been organised by the wonderful Pathway charity. It was thrilling to mix with hundreds of other people who were deeply concerned about the complex physical and mental health issues that often affect people who are



experiencing homelessness. There was a determination amongst those present to address the huge inequality that still sees rough sleepers typically die in their forties. I left the conference inspired to do more to ensure that New Hope does everything possible to ensure that people accessing our services are able to receive the health care they so often desperately need.

Encouragingly, I have found that this aspiration is shared with an increasing number of professionals in the region where we operate. If you pray, please pray that organisations and agencies will work together really effectively to ensure that some of the most vulnerable people in our community receive the health

care that they so desperately need.

Remarkably and wonderfully, Leo is still alive today. He has his own flat and he is in better health. But the image of his leg has stayed with me ever since.

Enjoy reading the rest of this newsletter. There is much to be encouraged by and much to pray about. The work of New Hope is as relevant and needed as it has ever been. Thank you so much for your partnership with us.



Matthew

Matthew Heasman
CEO



RESTORE & RECOVER

Mental health is a big issue for people experiencing homelessness. Please donate to our **Restore & Recover** appeal this month and help improve someone's wellbeing, self-worth, and self-confidence.



RESTORE & RECOVER

So many of us are experiencing increased stress, anxiety and generally reduced happiness due to rising costs and decreasing financial security.



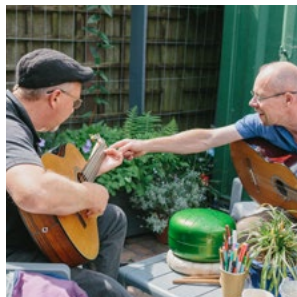
are facing mental health challenges or are experiencing homelessness but rarely are there services that will cater to multiple needs simultaneously.

Cultivate exists to bridge accommodation and support services, working alongside people every step of the way from accessing crisis support at New Hope's Haven, through their recovery and into their own homes. Cultivate supports mental health and wellbeing, nurturing independence and rebuilding confidence through bespoke, therapeutic creative activities and practical projects.

Amongst people with experiences of homelessness, poor mental health is common, especially for those who have been rough sleeping. A lack of security and safety can quickly become a downward spiral of worsening mental health which then becomes its own barrier to seeking support. Substance or alcohol misuse, both a cause and consequence of homelessness, further compounds the mental health challenges faced by many people and present further limitations to what support is available.

There are support services available to people who struggle with addiction,





£7.68 can provide a spontaneous activity such as potting a plant, a music session or wellbeing discussion.



£23.03 can provide practical workshops, creative art activities or a group outing to local parks, the driving range or boardgame café.



£43.92 can provide service user led, goal-focussed support work as part of a sequence of sessions including horticultural therapy or a creative project.

Cultivate is unique to New Hope and provides essential support for people facing wellbeing and mental health challenges. Please, if you are able, consider a donation to help people to restore their mental health, self-worth and confidence as they recover from homelessness.

Thank you.

Only gifts donated online between 14th and 28th May are eligible for match-funding but if you would like to give by cheque, please make it payable to New Hope and send it to New Hope, 67 Queens Road, Watford, WD17 2QN.

A donation of £23.03 can provide a practical workshop or creative activity with one of the Cultivate team while £43.92 can support someone in a goal-focussed project or horticultural therapy course.

All donations received from 14th-28th May will be doubled by the Big Give for Kind2Mind 2024.



Please give today at
newhope.org.uk/restore



From rough sleeping to a positive place

A family tragedy changed everything for Tom and he left his hometown, often rough sleeping and using alcohol to cope.

He was facing a number of personal challenges and a complicated relationship that made it difficult to stay in one place for very long.

At New Hope's Emergency Accommodation, Tom met with the Cultivate team and enjoyed working with them to maintain the outdoor spaces.

No matter how low he felt, whenever Tom saw the Cultivate team, he would always speak to them,

knowing they were always there to listen and would never judge him. Tom and the Cultivate team worked well together and, as he continued to make progress, he moved to our Recovery Services to overcome his addiction.

During the first 28 days he focussed on leaving the alcohol behind. Cultivate often worked with him to come up with activities which gave him something physically and mentally to work towards. He had a garden space to make his own

“I was properly in a bad place. I lost my partner and the grief was having a major impact but all the time I wanted to do something to make them proud of me.”



and began working on a wooden cross to place at the grave of a close friend. He could really see the benefit of his time with Cultivate, of growing things, of using what he learnt to teach and support others in their recovery too.

Tom wants to be successful, to get his own place with his own space to grow things too. Right now, he is enjoying helping other residents to maintain the garden space at the Recovery Services and is in a really positive place. Tom is now focussing on what he wants as he continues to work at his recovery, looking to the future instead of behind him.



RESTORE & RECOVER



All donations received from 14th to 28th May will be doubled as part of the Big Give Kind2Mind

2024. During this week, if you give £43.92 an extra £43.92 will be match-funded, meaning that New Hope will receive £87.84! Match-funding is only available for two weeks so don't miss out on making your donation go twice as far!

Only gifts donated online between 14th and 28th May are eligible for match-funding. However, if you would like to donate by cheque, please make it payable to New Hope and send it to New Hope, 67 Queens Road, Watford, WD17 2QN.



Please give today at
newhope.org.uk/restore

“Cultivate activities are therapeutic. It's calm and reflective and gives you a bond with other people that you wouldn't normally get. It's amazing how infectious their positive thinking is.”

HOPE

NOT HOMELESSNESS
at Christmas

Christmas Appeal Update

Thank you to everyone who donated to Hope, not Homelessness, our 2023 Christmas appeal. Over £57,000 was raised to help people experiencing homelessness in Watford. All donations will fund the work of the Haven, our drop-in and advice centre on Whippendell Road.

Katherine's story:

“I'd been to the Haven every now and again for breakfast and a shower but the Outreach Team were always coming out to see me – it felt like they really cared about me and even if they'd woken me up I was grateful. One morning they came and said “come to the Haven today.” I remember going, expecting just some donated

clothes but they gave me a brand-new winter coat, waterproof trousers that fitted and a pair of new walking boots in my size. They were like a blessing.

The Haven was warm, inviting, no questions asked. It was such a safe environment for me that I used to sometimes nap on the sofa and that was like a week's worth of sleep compared to on the street. I used to





get a packed lunch in a bag too and it was like being back at school again. The team gave a human touch, always cheery, always welcoming. It really cushioned out the terrible reality of your situation.

The team got me into accommodation and things really started changing for me. I got into my room and I could lock the door – it really takes some getting used to, having a bed, electricity, running water, a shower. I was given my own TV by my keyworker and I didn't even watch it for the first few days, I just stared at it – it had been so long since I had one.

I get gifts at Christmas, even my birthday being recognised with a card and cake, ultimately the fact that people here celebrate 'you', I really appreciate it. On Christmas now, I get to put my feet up while

We were surprised and delighted that the match-funding total for **Hope, not Homelessness** was reached within a day! Many of you were disappointed that your donation was not able to be match-funded but the good news is we now have another opportunity for your gift to be doubled! Donate to our Restore and Recover appeal and donations will be match-funded (from 14th to 28th May or until we reach our £10,000 target)!

newhope.org.uk/restore

the staff rush about making us all a Christmas dinner – the chaos of it all really makes this place feel like a home. ”

UPDATE: Katherine is now living independently in her own flat which she loves!





A warm, safe and homely environment

This year's Watford Winter Shelter was exceptional and a great example of how to run a warm, welcoming, peaceful, and homely emergency accommodation service. Staff and volunteers cooked delicious, healthy and filling meals and different activities were available (led by Cultivate who head up New Hope's mental health activities and well-being

programme), including a chess tournament, board games, quizzes, music sessions, art, plant care, and origami.



“I have to say it's good that the Winter Shelter has been back at the Haven. It was good fun but the highlight has to be playing chess and playing in a tournament with the service users.”

It was just on a completely other level and really reinforced the fact people in the service are just people who have been dealt a rubbish hand and how it can happen to anyone.”

Nadir,
Watford Winter Shelter volunteer

“They've very friendly here. You won't starve here. Fantastic meals, Five-star meals! Fantastic! And the staff have really done a really good job. I have to say, they are fantastic. They got me into the YMCA and I'm now looking for a place to rent.”

A Watford Winter Shelter service user





“Through volunteering, we can play an important role in supporting the most disadvantaged people in society. Volunteering is a very rewarding experience and promotes personal growth and has given me a new understanding and perspective of the lives of homeless people.”

Rose,
Watford Winter Shelter volunteer

“I spent a lot of time being looked after by New Hope’s Tenancy Sustainment Team, in particular, so it’s an opportunity for me to give something back.”

Bob,
Watford Winter Shelter volunteer

95 people were provided with accommodation at the shelter

12 people came for meals only

45 people moved on to longer-term accommodation

28 wellbeing sessions held by Cultivate

37 people regularly volunteered

Thank you to everyone who volunteered and to Watford Borough Council who funded the provision!

If you would like to support New Hope’s vital activities and well-being programme, please donate today to our Restore & Recover appeal!
newhope.org.uk/restore



God as our source.

Now may the God of peace make you holy in every way, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again. God will make this happen, for he who calls you is faithful.

1 Thessalonians 5: 23-24

In a time where there is so much uncertainty and anxiety, maintaining good, positive mental health and wellbeing are so important to everyone of all ages. There are many great worldly programmes that we can engage in to help us in this, but I have found only one source that has lasting results body, soul and spirit.

As the New Hope chaplain, I have opportunities to talk to many people who are struggling with their mental health through various reasons and, as a consequence, in the grip of addictions to block out the pain.

One such young man had for many years struggled with both alcohol and drug addictions and had lost everything as a result. We would spend time walking and talking together and the conversation would

naturally turn to my faith and who Jesus is to me. He would ask me question after question and say that he could feel Jesus with me, yet he was never ready to make that commitment to trust in Him. He struggled with loneliness, depression and would strive to be a better person, yet kept falling and ending up lost in his pain. I began to share Bible verses with him that showed him how God loved him and that he was never alone.

One day, this young man called out to Jesus to help him and this incredible peace came over him that he had never experienced before. The realisation he was loved and never alone enabled him to trust in Jesus and his life is being turned around – body, soul and spirit.



Sarah Shaw,
Chaplain at New Hope

Prepare to launch!

Behind the scenes, we have been working hard on our exciting project: The Hub. We have a vision to create a new purpose-built centre incorporating drop-in services, such as hot food and showers, housing advice, and emergency accommodation. The Hub will also involve professional partnerships with statutory and charitable organisations, so that people affected by homelessness can easily access health care, addiction support, mental health provision, and probation services – all in one place!

Thanks to a considerable donation from a private individual, we now have the funds to buy our desired location and then we will soon begin fundraising for the next stage of this once-in-a-lifetime project. We want to create a building using sustainable principles, in line with our ethos of Psychologically Informed Environments (“services that are designed and delivered in a way that takes into account the emotional and psychological needs of the individuals using them and working in them”*) which meets the future needs of our service users.



Andrew Robertson, one of New Hope's trustees, is chairing a

Fundraising Committee, and working with New Hope's Fundraising and Communications Team to help us reach our ambitious target. We hope to launch the appeal in the autumn so please watch out for it!



We all know that people who sleep rough need access to suitable accommodation that meets their needs, but this in itself is not enough. We recognise that they also need wider support through health care, mental health, substance misuse and support services.”

The Government's Rough Sleeping Strategy

Homeless far away from home

For several years, New Hope has worked with a steady stream of individuals who, due to their immigration status, are unable to access housing benefit and universal credit, leaving them with no safety net should they find themselves homeless.

Restricted or no access to benefits is often because people have no current immigration permission due to having not completed necessary paperwork or sometimes because of an overstayed visa. Some people we see have limited leave to remain (can stay and work in the UK but cannot access the benefit system) and are waiting for official refugee status after fleeing warzones or persecution in their home countries.

For migrants who do not have refugee status, access to benefits is dependent on having 'settled status' after five years of living and working in the UK and submitting an application to the Home Office. During the interval, there is no welfare support whatsoever if employment was to end and, as many people are renting or living in

accommodation provided by their employer, they often become homeless.

There are many barriers to obtaining the settled or refugee status people are entitled to and there is no one-size-fits-all approach. In addition, people may be facing significant language barriers preventing them from both reading and understanding what is being

asked of them. Even once the paperwork is submitted, an application may not be processed for weeks or even months.

There are a limited number of bedspaces available year-round at New Hope for



people with no access to benefits and the winter shelter gave many people accommodation when they were not entitled to stay anywhere else. External services are

“We’ve always done the humanitarian support at the Haven – anyone can come in for a meal, clothes, showers – we always want to help people. Helping people who can’t claim benefits is just an addition to that support. We are tenacious and want people to know that there is always someone here to help them and advocate for them even when it might take a long time.”

Karoline,
Restricted Eligibility Support Worker,
the Haven



constantly oversubscribed and there is little other support for people while they get on their feet.

It is therefore essential that, at the Haven, we can offer humanitarian support and help for people to clarify their immigration status. We can arrange an address where people can receive mail and paperwork, support them in accessing healthcare and to set up a bank account, even while they may be rough sleeping or sofa surfing. We ensure that all aspects of support at the Haven are available to people regardless of their immigration status and access to benefits.

Since beginning to provide more specialist support, the Haven has seen successes in supporting people with restricted access to benefits. For one man, support services had tried before to obtain immigration paperwork but got nowhere so, after several years of homelessness, he had few expectations of anyone. Through working with the Haven, he now has fully settled status, access to Housing Benefit, healthcare and has applied for accommodation with a local housing provider.





Volunteering News

We've had lots of volunteering going on at New Hope over the last six months, including seasonal projects, such as the Watford Winter Shelter and our Christmas dinner volunteer cooks. We also continue to receive amazing support from our regular shop volunteers, cooks at the Haven, receptionists at the Sanctuary, and drivers who pick up donated groceries from local shops.

Earlier this year, Eamonn, HR and Volunteer Administrator, spent a morning at our Croxley shop and was bowled over by the welcoming atmosphere created by Bella, the manager, alongside her incredible team of volunteers, including Jacqui and Marie.

“ I started at the Croxley shop around four and a half years ago, doing Wednesday mornings for Bev, the manager at the time. When Bella, the new manager, started, she asked if I could do all

day for just a short while—that was over a year ago!

A typical day starts with making a cuppa for the team, followed by a chat with Bella to discuss what we are intending to do during the day. We have our regular customers who come in at their regular times, some to purchase and some to unburden themselves of worries. We really are a hub in the community.

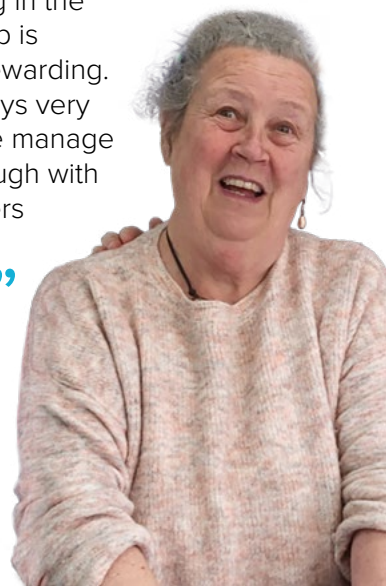
Volunteering in the Croxley shop is incredibly rewarding. We are always very busy, but we manage to have a laugh with the customers and other volunteers. ”

Marie,
Croxley
shop
volunteer



Eamonn Bownes
HR and Volunteer
Administrator

If you would like to volunteer at New Hope, please have a look at newhope.org.uk/volunteer for current vacancies.



Recognition from the High Sheriff

On Tuesday 26th March, Rob Edmonds, New Hope's Deputy CEO, and staff from the Haven represented New Hope at the 29th Hertfordshire High Sheriff Awards. To our surprise, New Hope won an award with a prize of £1,000 in the category of Homelessness.

This was for our outstanding work in helping people escape homelessness and achieve stable housing. The following observations were also made: "Staff and volunteers are caring

and considerate of people and their challenges. New Hope sees each person not as a sum of their past challenges but as an individual with a future away from homelessness."



“ I first came across New Hope when looking online for volunteer opportunities. I called into the Croxley shop a few days later, and the staff were welcoming and friendly, having a banter and laughing. The atmosphere was good, so I talked to the manager and was encouraged to apply.

Every day at the shop is different, but a typical shift involves helping to open the shop, putting some items outside on display, working on the till, and going through donations.

The shop is a community hub in Croxley. I'm really enjoying my volunteering; it gives me a sense of self-worth; I get to meet new people and make friends, as well as helping my local community. Everyone wins! ”

Jacqui, Croxley shop volunteer

FUNDRAISING



Stadium Sleep Out Success

On Friday 1 March, nearly 300 people gathered at Vicarage Road Stadium for the first ever Stadium Sleep Out! New Hope teamed up with other Hertfordshire homelessness charities, DENS, Herts Young Homeless and One YMCA, as well as the Watford FC Community Sports Education Trust to raise over £69,000 for people experiencing homelessness in the county.



The night was wet and cold but the participants, who included New Hope staff and volunteers, local businesses, Scout troops, and faith groups, had a great time listening to live music from Electric Umbrella, hearing from inspirational speakers, and taking part in fun art activities.

Team Haven posted on social media during the event, and one post in the middle of the night particularly highlighted the reality of just how awful sleeping rough must be: **“It’s currently 2:45AM and the temperature is just three degrees, rain is pouring. For us it’s just one night outside: imagine having to face this daily. It’s unimaginable.”**

“I enjoyed it and it gave me an insight into what it’s like for those sleeping rough. We are going home to our beds but the homeless have to do this again and again. This is why doing this event to fundraise for the charities is important.”

Rian, age 11



Thank you to everyone who took part!

HEROES

Matt's January Challenge



Who started off the New Year with good intentions to keep fit and eat healthily?! Well, Matt Tristram from Loans Warehouse took it to the next level! For a whole month, he gave up alcohol and meat and every day did 100 press-ups, 100 sit-ups, 100 dips, 100 squats, ran 2.5 miles and had a cold shower – all to raise money for New Hope! Matt's colleagues and friends donated a huge £3,600! Well done and thank you!

I like to ride my bicycle!

Raj Nathwani is a regular donor to the Haven, frequently buying food and toiletries as well as garden furniture! He also encourages his friends and colleagues to get involved. Raj will be taking part in RideLondon at the end of May, cycling 100 miles from London to Essex as a fundraiser for New Hope. Thank you, Raj, for all you give!



Giles runs miles!

Giles Greenhalgh will be taking part in the Jurassic 100k run event on 18th May in aid of New Hope. A veteran of triathlons and endurance cycle events, Giles is always on the lookout for a new challenge! He will be taking part in the Jurassic Ultra along the Dorset coast starting at Corfe Castle and running through Swanage along the coast to Lulworth and then inland, ending up in Bridport. He has chosen to support New Hope in recognition of what we do to fight for justice. Thank you, Giles!



Could you be like Matt, Raj and Giles and take part in your own fundraising challenge?

**email hgarcia@newhope.org.uk
or rpalmer@newhope.org.uk**



Provide Hope and a Home

Could you help people experiencing homelessness by leaving a gift in your will?

Last year, New Hope received over £45,000 from gifts in wills. These gifts came from Hertfordshire residents, who had seen the impact of New Hope, and wanted to give to a local charity making a difference in their community.

If you are interested in leaving a gift in your will, we'd love to take you on a Walk of Hope to show you some of our services for yourself. We are happy to answer any questions you have about our finances, fundraising and plans for the future.

For more information on how to leave a gift in your will, please visit newhope.org.uk/legacies



New Hope

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