

# WYCOMBE HOMELESS CONNECTION

## UPDATE 14<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2020



Dear friends

Hello

As summer arrives in a different way to usual, we hope this message continues to find you, your loved ones and your fellowship well.

You may have heard by now that in response to the ongoing pandemic and advice from the government, we are changing the way we will run our emergency night shelter this coming winter. We continue to work on plans to make sure our unique style of support is available for those who need it this winter and will be sharing news as soon as we can.

**Having a stable place to stay makes such a difference to people like Mark whose story you'll find below. Not having to worry about where you will sleep each night gives our clients the chance to use their energy to concentrate on building a healthy future.**

### **Mark's story: Moving in ... and on**

Mark spent many years on the street as he struggled to keep his life on track.

Last November as temperatures dropped, we helped him get a room in some emergency winter accommodation that is provided the local authority. His spot was agreed on a temporary basis; he was finding settling there very difficult.

Sadly, it looked like he was going to be asked to leave as his behaviour was deteriorating. We were anxious to find him somewhere suitable to stay before he ended up back on the street again.

But Mark had been housed, evicted, slept rough and then started the cycle again so many times the places that had room for him and would agree to take him were limited.

We worked with him and found one option; a local supported living facility would be willing to give him a place, but he had previously lived there and had run up rent arrears. He needed to clear them before he would be welcomed again.

We had to come up with a solution to help Mark break the cycle.

We worked with the council and Wycombe Rent Deposit Scheme and managed to arrange a new-style agreement between us to clear his rental arrears.

We approached the team at the supported living facility with our offer and it worked.

In early March, just before lockdown, Mark moved into his own room where he remains. He is doing well and working hard to keep settled and safe.

### **Support services news**

We have been trialling a small re-opening of our Support Centre in a covid-19 safe way and so far, so good! Clients are able to book an appointment via our hotline. They can also get help on the phone or online which is proving effective and popular. We opened our homelessness prevention hotline as lockdown started but it is working so well we are keeping it going!

We are also working on our housing legal advice clinics which were drop-in sessions but that's no longer a safe way to run them. So we're starting a trial of an appointment system there too.

Homelessness prevention is still the fastest growing area of our work and we don't expect that to change with the lifting of the pandemic-related eviction ban at the end of August.

### **Prayer requests**

- For peace for all our guests and clients as they still face so much uncertainty and so many challenges.
- For the plans about emergency accommodation this winter, that as few people as possible will need it but that what we do provide is as helpful as it can be.
- For our ongoing homelessness prevention work on ensuring that no one loses their home due to the coronavirus pandemic, or at all!
- For the health, safety and wellbeing of our team as they run Support Centre and start trials of our other services.
- For our volunteers, thanks for their generosity and patience as we work out how to safely involve them in this important work.

### **Fundraising news**

#### **Helen v Everest!**

It is less than a fortnight until Helen Biggerstaff, our Services Manager, rides her bike 'up Everest' to raise money for us! Between working out how to safely change our services, she's been training hard: "I have been training on my bike using an indoor trainer which is what I'll ride on the day. I expect the 210km and 8850m of ascent to take 15 hrs!"

You can sponsor her online or get in touch!

<https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/HelenBiggerstaff1>

**Save the date: Our showcase and celebration**

**Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> October: 7.30pm.**

Join Wycome Homeless Connection online to reflect on the year gone by, one like no other, and to look to the future of Wycombe Homeless Connection.

As we were unable to host our annual celebration in the spring, we are combining elements of that event with this. All are most welcome and we hope you will join us. More details soon.

**Keeping in touch**

Do also keep an eye on our website and social media.

Website: [www.wyhoc.org.uk](http://www.wyhoc.org.uk)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/WycombeHomelessConnection/](http://www.facebook.com/WycombeHomelessConnection/)

Twitter: [www.twitter.com/wycombehomesless](http://www.twitter.com/wycombehomesless)

Instagram: [www.instagram.com/wycombehomeslessconnection/](http://www.instagram.com/wycombehomeslessconnection/)



**Contact us**

For more information on anything in this update please contact our Church Link, Ali Preston, at [ali.preston@wyhoc.org.uk](mailto:ali.preston@wyhoc.org.uk).

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