



# RESTART

CREATING SAFE SPACES TO RESTART LIVES

EST. 2009



# ANNUAL REPORT 24/25

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# OVERVIEW

IN 24/25 I CAME INTO MY SECOND YEAR AS CEO FOR RESTART LIVES. IN MY FIRST YEAR, I SPENT A LOT OF TIME TAKING STOCK, AND TRYING NEW APPROACHES, STARTING NEW INITIATIVES, AND PUTTING IN PLACE NEW REPORTING FRAMEWORKS.

ANY TIME NEW SERVICES ARE OFFERED, THERE HAS TO BE A PERIOD OF INFORMAL CONSULTATION WITH GUESTS, HEARING ABOUT WHAT IS WANTED AND NEEDED, AND WHAT IS WORKING AND WORKING LESS WELL IN THE NEW OFFERING, AS WELL AS A PERIOD OF TRUST BUILDING AROUND ANY NEW SERVICE. IN 23/24 DESPITE TAKING OUR TIME WITH THIS KIND OF THOROUGH FOUNDATIONAL WORK AROUND NEW SERVICES, WE SAW MORE GUESTS ENGAGE THAN EVER AS WELL AS A GREATER IMPACT BY A RANGE OF MEASURES THAN EVER BEFORE.

IN 24/25 WE BUILT ON THIS FOUNDATION AND AGAIN HAD A RECORD YEAR FOR THE NUMBER OF GUESTS SUPPORTED AND THE SUCCESS OF THE SUPPORT WE OFFERED.

WE MAINTAINED EXCELLENT PARTNERSHIPS WITH HAIRCUTS4HOMELESS, DWP AND JOBCENTRES, CITY HARVEST, SOCIAL BITE, CARLOWRIE CASTLE, ALIXPARTNERS, DANI ORGANICS, VODAFONE, WRAP UP LONDON, SHELTERSUIT FOUNDATION AND OTHERS, AS WELL AS BEGINNING NEW RELATONSHIPS WITH CANACCORD GENUITY, CLEARBELL, SESSIONS, KERB, AND OTHERS.

OUR COMMUNITY PULLED TOGETHER IN AN INCREDIBLE EFFORT TO RAISE FUNDS THROUGH OUR SLEEPOUT EVENT. WE ALSO WIDENED OUR BASE OF SUPPORT WITH FUNDING BEING AWARDED BY GARFIELD WESTON FOUNDATION, THE HANS AND JULIA RAUSING TRUST, SKINNER'S CHARITABLE TRUST, THE NAPIER FUND, AND AVIVA COMMUNITY TRUST. WITHOUT THIS SUPPORT OUR WORK WOULD HAVE BEEN IMPOSSIBLE.

EVERY SINGLE PERSON WHO MANAGED TO MOVE THEIR LIFE IN A POSITIVE DIRECTION WITH OUR SUPPORT IN 24/25 WAS ABLE TO DO SO BECAUSE OF THE SUPPORT WE HAVE BEHIND US TO MAKE OUR WORK POSSIBLE.

**Catherine Flay, CEO**

# VALUES AND MISSION STATEMENT

IN 24/25 WE CONDUCTED A MULTI-LEVEL CONSULTATION TO REVIEW OUR VALUES AND MISSION STATEMENT. GUESTS, VOLUNTEERS, STAFF AND TRUSTEES ALL PARTICIPATED AND WE CONCLUDED WITH A REINVIGORATED SENSE OF WHAT WE DO, WHY WE DO IT AND HOW WE DO IT.

## RESPECT, COMPASSION, CHANGE

These values mean that:

- We listen to guests in a non-judgemental way.
- We motivate guests to achieve what they need, and to do their best, and at the same time we accept where guests are and their pace.
- We support guests to understand their options to change and help them to navigate the relevant systems.
- We campaign for institutional change.

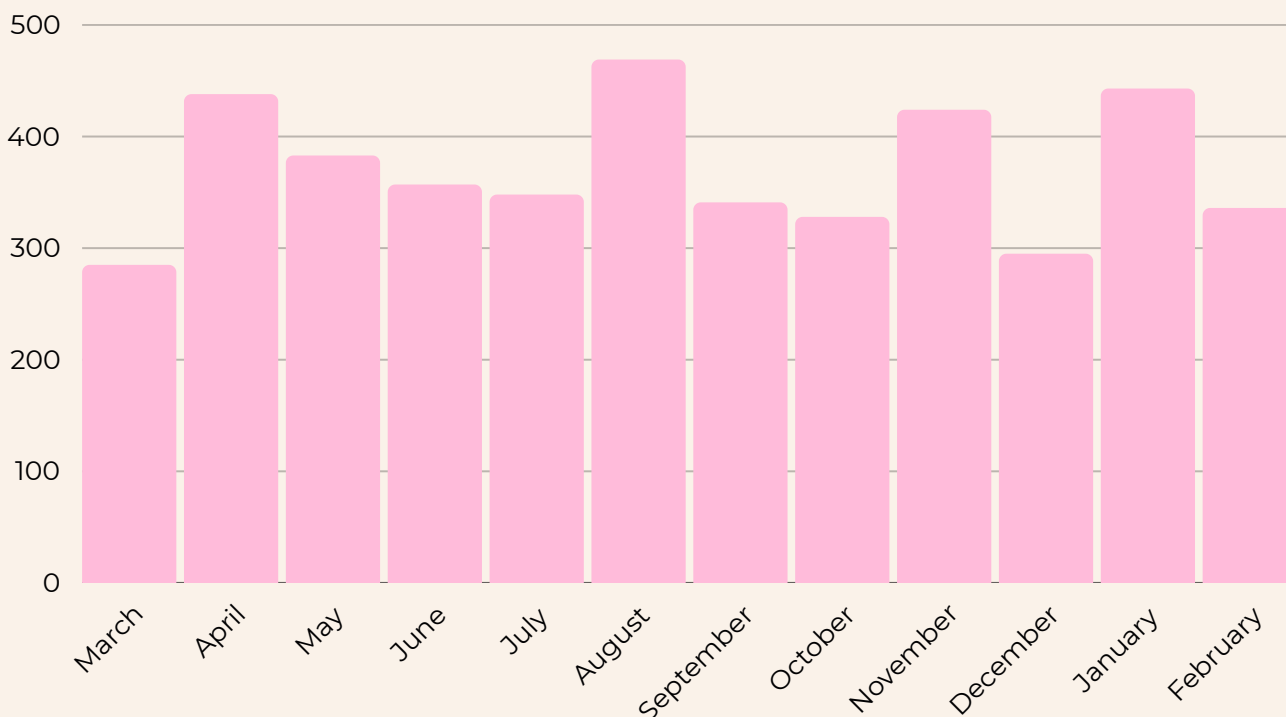
AND THIS IS HOW WE ARTICULATE OUR MISSION:

“RESTART LIVES EMPOWERS LONDON’S HOMELESS TO OVERCOME THE PERSONAL AND SYSTEMIC BARRIERS THEY ARE FACING AND TO REACH THEIR SELF-DEFINED GOALS. FROM HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT, TO MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH, WE OFFER WRAPAROUND CASEWORK AND GROUP PROGRAMMES AIMED AT EMPOWERING EACH PERSON TO TAKE POSITIVE STEPS THAT ARE RIGHT FOR THEM. WE BELIEVE EVERYONE DESERVES A SAFE HOME.”



# THE DROP IN

We continued to run our drop in service every Friday night, 6.30-8.30pm at St Columba's church in Knightsbridge.



We saw some small fluctuation in figures month on month over the course of the year, but tracked very similar numbers to last year, with an average of 87 guests per week. Running resource fairs separate to the Drop In perhaps slightly split where guests came for a meal and community and where they came for vital items.

This year we:

- served 14481 meals
- supported 666 unique individuals in this service alone
- continued our partnership with Haircuts for Homeless offering a haircut service every 6 weeks
- Gave over 250 haircuts

At Christmas time, we gave Christmas gifts to all 122 guests who came through our doors for a festive meal on 20th December. These gifts were kindly donated to us from Social Bite and included luxury toiletries, chocolates, and cold weather items.

Through January, we also gave 80 guests £5 Tesco vouchers to try to support guests to avoid January blues and keep up spirits and support, thanks to Dani Organics.

We now have over 1500 guests registered members of our Drop In and are almost at capacity for this service, so we go into the new financial year seeking to open a complimentary Saturday afternoon Drop In service in Central London.

# THE DROP IN

## CONTINUED...

Volunteers make the Drop In possible. Each week, a minimum of 10 volunteers support staff to prepare the meals, set up the space, welcome guests on reception, serve food, and prepare and serve hot and cold drinks.

During term time, Knightsbridge School students set up the space with chairs and tables as



The Knightsbridge School students who give their time and efforts to us each week are celebrated with the RESTART Lives Charity Champion award.

Knightsbridge School also brought us together with Thomas Franks, their caterers, who provide all ingredients and their own chef for special occasions such as Easter and Christmas.

We were able to run the drop in with food donations and donations of resources from City Harvest, Social Bite and the Country Food Trust.

THOMAS FRANKS



JULIA RAUSING  
— TRUST —

**In 2024 we received generous support from the Julia Rausing Foundation for 'Winter Support' offering over £11000 towards all the aspects of support we offer at the Drop In including the meals themselves and access to haircuts, casework and a laptop library.**

# THE DROP IN

CONTINUED...

FOR ANOTHER YEAR, WE BENEFITED HUGELY FROM OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH HAIRCUTS4HOMELESS WHICH SEES STEWART ROBERTS BRING HIS HAIRCUTTING CREW TO THE DROP IN EVERY SIX WEEKS, OFFERING BETWEEN 25 AND 50 HAIRCUTS IN EACH SESSION.

STEW HAS ALSO BEEN ON HAND TO CHAT TO INTERESTED GUESTS ABOUT HOW THEY MIGHT GET INTO HAIRDRESSING OR BARBERING .



**OVER 250 HAIRCUTS WERE GIVEN  
AT THE DROP IN IN 24/25**



**WE WERE DELIGHTED TO HAVE A VISIT FROM THE MAYOR,  
COUNCILLOR WILL LANE IN DECEMBER 2024.**

**HE THANKED US FOR THE WORK WE DO IN THE RBKC COMMUNITY  
AND CHATTED TO GUESTS AND VOLUNTEERS, TO LEARN MORE  
ABOUT HOMELESSNESS IN THE BOROUGH, AND TO SEE BEYOND  
THAT TO THE INDIVIDUAL STORIES OF THOSE AFFECTED.**





# TAKING THE DROP IN ON THE ROAD

Our Drop In is closed only two dates a year, the Friday closest to Christmas, and Good Friday as the church, St Columba's, where our service is based requires the space.

Over Easter weekend 2024, we took RESTART and the Drop In on the road, preparing our meals, loading them into a van and driving the whole operation over to Lincoln's Inn Fields. Staff and volunteers welcomed regular guests as well as other guests we didn't yet know to share a meal with us.



The event attracted regular volunteers as well as groups from Queen Mary University which is nearby.

We were supported by AlixPartners to make this possible.

# SHARING RESOURCES

WE RAN SEASONAL RESOURCE FAIRS, IN SUMMER AND WINTER, SHARING ITEMS TO KEEP OUR GUESTS AS SAFE AS POSSIBLE FROM THE ELEMENTS.

## WE SHARED:

- 100+ COATS
- CLOTHING SUCH AS TROUSERS, SHIRTS, HOODIES, SOCKS, UNDERWEAR, GLOVES, HATS, AND SHOES
- THERMAL CLOTHING
- PHONES AND CHARGING CABLES
- SIM CARDS WITH PAYMENT PLANS
- HYGIENE KITS AND TOILETRIES
- BAGS
- SPF 50
- WATER BOTTLES
- SUN SAFE CAPS



With thanks to our partners



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# CASEWORK

“Thank you, you make me feel like a person.”

This year, for the second year running, Restart Lives increased casework capacity, in recognition of the diverse causes of homelessness in the population we serve and the need to address the unique individual barriers that a person is facing in order to facilitate the most life changing results.

## CONCRETE RESULTS

- 165 ACTIVE ONE TO ONE CASES
- 86% OF GUESTS ACHIEVED ONE MILESTONE OR MORE
- 52% OF GUESTS SAW OR MORE STAGES PROGRESSED BY END OF YEAR
- 1/3 OF PEOPLE WERE IN PERMANENT HOUSING AFTER 12 MONTHS OR LESS OF CASEWORK
- OVER 50% OF GUESTS WERE ABLE TO IMPROVE THEIR HOUSING SITUATION AFTER 12 MONTHS OR LESS OF CASEWORK.



# CASEWORK

## MEASURING OUTCOMES

### HOW DID WE MEASURE OUTCOMES?

This year, we introduced new ways of measuring outcomes. These were:

- The Progress Pathway
- The Individual Progress Plan
- Concrete Outcome Areas

### THE PROGRESS PATHWAY

The Progress Pathway offers five categories of progress from Surviving, to Coping, Adapting, Changing and Thriving. When a guest first engages in casework, the Caseworker uses the category guidelines to assign a stage to that guest. As they continue working with the guest, the caseworker assesses every month or at every milestone (whichever comes first) which category of progress to assign to the guest. Our aim is for 50% or more guests to move at least one stage on the Progress Pathway which we surpassed this year.



Of course, guests who join at the Surviving stage, have much farther to go to be considered to be thriving. That is a big challenge, but also a big opportunity, and we saw 8% of guests who joined at that stage move 4 stages. For guests who join at Changing or Adapting, it may take them a long time to make those final jumps to be considered to be thriving as they are already doing relatively well. We recognise the qualitative difference between each stage, but nonetheless feel that the blanket target of moving at least one stage is realistic and achievable no matter where a person joins. As an organisation seeking to help facilitate positive change, we need to target at least 50% of our guests moving forward. We balance this with the target that the backwards steps need to be the smallest category, and that staying still is an achievement in itself.



# CASEWORK

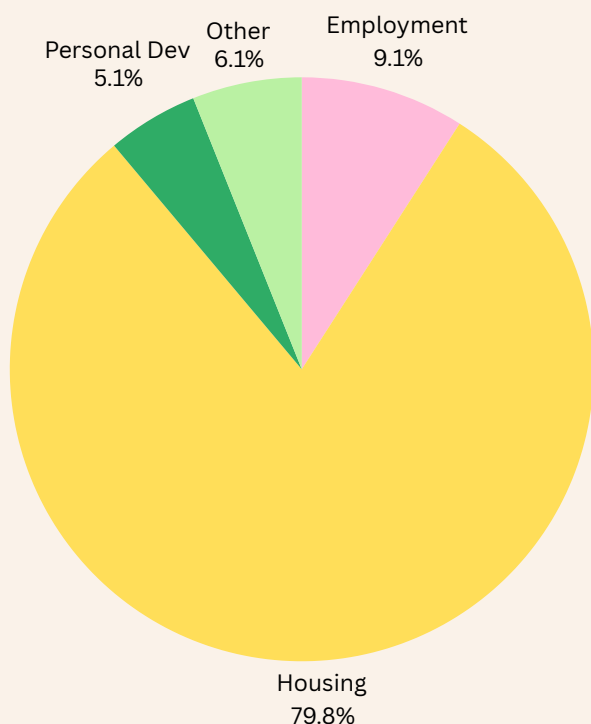
## THE INDIVIDUAL PROGRESS PLAN

The Individual Progress Plan works alongside the progress pathway.

- Jointly created by the guest and their caseworker, a progress plan involves identifying the key barrier holding a guest back and setting an ultimate goal in relation to overcoming that barrier.
- To break down the goal into manageable steps, each plan includes up to five, timebound milestone targets and agreed actions to take to reach those milestones and that goal.
- As each milestone passes, the caseworker records whether or not the target was reached and whether the guest can be assessed as having also moved along the progress pathway.

**This progress plan makes sure that the guests' self assessment of their barriers and goals is at the heart of what we support them to achieve.**

## GUESTS' GOALS



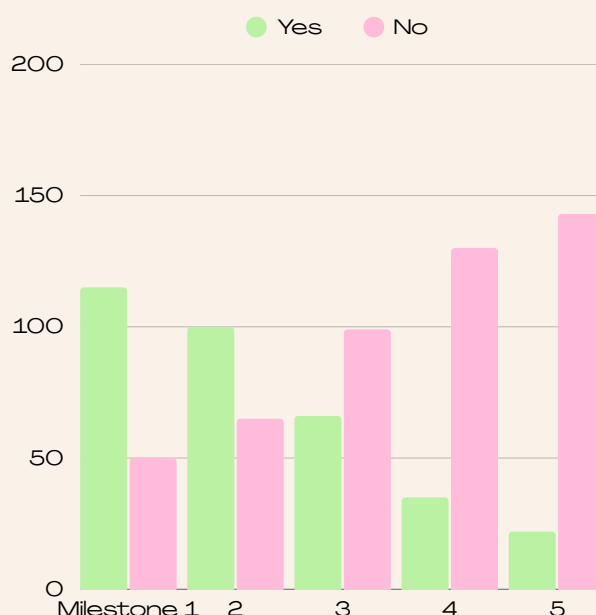
Most guests set goals in housing. We interpret this as showing:

- How the housing crisis is affecting guests' priorities
- A growing understanding that our caseworkers can support well with finding housing.
- A housing first approach is needed: many of these guests would also like to train, find work and address their mental health, but they make housing their priority as a basic need.

Guests who set a goal in 'other' predominantly set a goal relating to immigration, visas, and right to remain or right to work in the UK.

## MILESTONE ACHIEVEMENTS

The majority of guests achieved both their first and second milestones, but we can see that milestones three, four and five are achieved by fewer than half our guests engaging in casework. This may be because those guests achieve their goal before all milestones, drop off from casework without seeing the process through, or take time on their journey of progress either because we are waiting for other bodies such as the council, or because the guest is taking needed time to actively work on themselves and their situations. Overall, we have exceeded our target of 50% or more guests reaching one or more milestones through casework.





# CASE STUDIES

## MENTAL HEALTH AND HOUSING SUPPORT...

- I first encountered R during a community meal service I regularly attend. At our initial meeting, R was quite guarded and didn't share much about his personal life. He made it clear that he had little faith in charities, expressing a belief that they were primarily filled with "do-gooders" who, in his view, went through the motions without genuinely helping those in need. Over the course of the following month, I continued to check in with R. Slowly, he began to open up, and I noticed he was becoming more comfortable discussing some of the challenges he was facing.
- One of those challenges was his mental health. He explained that he is on PIP due to mental health difficulties, and at the time, he was experiencing depression. While he had struggled with depression before, he said he typically managed to "shake it off." In the past, he had used drugs and alcohol as coping mechanisms, though he was now sober from alcohol and expressed a strong desire not to return to those habits.
- Recognising the importance of mental health support, I shared with R our partnership with MIND and offered to arrange a session for him to try out. Initially, R declined the offer. However, each week at the meal service, we would talk about how he was feeling, and I would gently remind him of the opportunity for MIND sessions. After a few weeks of consistent check-ins, R reached out to me, asking if I could help organise those sessions. This marked a significant turning point for R, as it was the first time R had actively sought help from me. From initially being distrustful of people in roles like mine to taking the initiative to seek support, it demonstrated a desire and willingness for change and to make positive changes. R later shared with me at one of the meal services, "I feel so down all the time, but then I come here and speak to people like you, and it makes me feel a bit better."
- As our work together continued, R began to identify more areas where he wanted assistance. One of the issues was his rent arrears, which had accumulated over the years. I could sense that R was feeling overwhelmed by the situation. When he asked for my help with this issue, we decided to reach out to Shelter for their legal support. Initially, R was hesitant about the proposed appointment, expressing that he couldn't be bothered and felt it was too much trouble. I didn't pressure R to accept the appointment, but instead wrote down the time options on a piece of paper which I handed to him and reassured him that we could attend the appointment together if he decided he did want to attend. The following day, R called me to say he was ready and would like my help with it. Since then we have begun working together on managing his arrears, a process that will continue in the coming months.
- During our meeting with the solicitor, R disclosed further challenges regarding the disrepair in his home. He felt a great deal of shame about the state of his accommodation and, as a result, hadn't wanted to let anyone in who might be able to help him fix the issues. R explained that he couldn't face addressing the disrepair until his rent arrears were sorted. R was aware that the arrears could take years to resolve, however he said he wanted to focus on one issue at a time. However, several weeks later, R contacted me to request another meeting, this time to discuss how he could address the issues with his home. This proactive step again reflected his increasing desire for change and his willingness to seek help when ready.
- While R continues to navigate significant challenges, the progress I have witnessed in such a short time has been remarkable. His journey demonstrates that many individuals are ready for change, but often need the right environment to begin that process. I have aimed to create a safe, supportive space for R, adhering to the core values of Restart Lives. By taking a person-centred approach—one that respects R's pace and autonomy, offering him options and waiting for him to take action when he feels ready—to create an environment where R feels comfortable enough to seek support and take meaningful steps towards improving his situation.

**BY ASHLEIGH JONES, CASEWORKER**

# CASE STUDIES

## COMPLEX MENTAL HEALTH, SEN, AND ROUGH SLEEPING

### Employment

- When I first met G, it was at our Friday night drop-in. He was staying at the Glassdoor night shelter and reached out for support in finding employment. We discussed some of the organisations we could refer him to, and he showed interest in construction. I referred G to the LCA Construction Academy, and he enrolled in the course. During his time in the course, I checked in with G, and he mentioned how much he was enjoying it. The course was located far enough away that he had to take the tube each day, but the course covered the cost of transport, helping to remove a barrier that many people face when wanting to start employment or training. G told me he actually enjoyed the commute, that it gave him a chance to see different parts of London and made him feel like he was just like everyone else heading to work or study.
- After completing the course, G asked for help in finding a job. I suggested Connection Crew, which he thought was a great fit. The flexible hours of the zero-hour contract were perfect for him, as he was easing back into work and didn't want to commit to full-time hours right away. G attended the induction and started working for Connection Crew without any issues.
- I saw a noticeable change in G. Every time I saw him at the drop-in, if he'd had a busy work week, he'd mention how tired he was but how much he loved the job. He said it felt empowering to be earning a wage and taking care of himself. G would thank me each time we spoke for referring him to the course and helping him start at Connection Crew, expressing how much he was enjoying it. As G wanted more hours, I helped him update his CV and apply to construction agencies, which helped him secure more work. He was successful in this, and an agency employed him for ad hoc shifts.

### Housing:

- When I first met G, he was staying at the Glassdoor night shelter, but when it closed, he didn't have anywhere to go. G is an experienced rough sleeper and, for personal reasons, has chosen not to claim benefits. This decision limits his accommodation options since most hostels require proof of benefit claims to cover their stay. G's goal has always been to work and save enough money to afford his own housing without relying on benefits. Over time, he managed to save enough, and we began exploring accommodation options through our partner agencies. However, at the time, the options weren't in the area where G wanted to live. We discussed the option of moving temporarily to a different area, with the plan to relocate later, but G said he would prefer to wait and find the right place in the location he wanted. For him, he said he would rather continue rough sleeping as opposed to needing to move twice. With Restart's person-centred approach, and after multiple conversations, I respected his choice and continued supporting him as he pursued his goals. Restart meets guests where they are at and supports them around the goals the guest wants. With this in mind, I assisted G with whatever I could to make sure he was as safe as possible whilst rough sleeping. For example, offering practical support like hand warmers and a shelter bag, while also helping him move forward with his other self-defined goals.

# CASE STUDIES

## HOUSING, EMPLOYMENT, PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- I started working with J in October 2024. She was referred to me by her Jobcentre work coach. She is a 55 yrs old Black/British single female who was facing housing instability following the loss of her job in the consultancy sector, which led to financial difficulties and ultimately homelessness. She ended up having to sell her house in 2023. Since then, she sofa-surfed and stayed at a self-funded hotel with support from friends and family, in the hope of finding a new job and starting over. When that didn't happen, she sought help. The first action was to make a homeless application with the council. I supported her throughout the application, liaising with her housing officer, helping her with technology, accompanying her to meetings. Meanwhile, her funds were finished, without a job and means to pay for temporary accommodation, J ended up on the streets. I managed to get her a place at an emergency shelter for a few nights (The Marylebone Project), moving then to Glassdoor, a night shelter, where she stayed for 3 months. After many emails and documents sent, 3 months later, her homeless application was finally accepted, and we were able to support J finding a private accommodation the council helped secure.
- J's journey has been one of persistence and coordination among various housing services. Despite numerous setbacks, she is now in stable housing. Her progress has been supported through referrals, assistance with paperwork, and access to resources like bus tickets and foodbank vouchers. The close collaboration between agencies such as Tower Hamlets Council, Hope Worldwide, Glassdoor, and others, combined with J's proactive involvement, has been crucial in moving her case forward.
- The immediate focus now is on ensuring that J settles into her new flat, that any additional needs for the household are met and finding work. She is now ready for the next steps in rebuilding her life.

**BY PAULA MAZZEO, CASEWORKER**

# CASE STUDIES

## HOUSING, PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- The individual in this case is a 19-year-old British-Bangladeshi female who has faced significant housing instability. After her father passed away in 2016, she and her family began the process of obtaining British citizenship. After a series of challenges, they were successful in 2024. She moved to the UK in July 2024, seeking a better life. Since her arrival, she has been staying with a half-brother, but by January 2025, he asked her to leave, at which point she was referred to me by her work coach at the JC. On the 8th Jan/25 we made a homeless application with an interview date booked for February, past the deadline she was given. I decided to take her in person to the council on the day she was going to be homeless so we could have an emergency appointment. That is what happened and we were seen by a very helpful housing officer who tried hard to help.
- Even though she is not considered priority to be housed in emergency accommodation, she qualifies for the Young People's pathway which includes emergency accommodation for a few months, a key worker and support for a move on plan. Even though she was lucky that they had a vacancy, that was only going to be on the Monday. That was Friday.
- I managed to contact a Night Shelter we partner with occasionally, refer her and arrange an interview. She was put in that shelter for the weekend moving to the Young's People accommodation on Monday.
- I also helped her with some items for the house (bedding, kettle, mug and toiletries) as she only had a backpack.
- The individual's situation was addressed with urgency and dedication from various housing support services. After being asked to leave her half-brother's home, she was quickly referred to Hackney Night Shelter for temporary accommodation. The support from Hackney Night Shelter and the Tower Hamlets housing officer helped her secure a place in supported accommodation, where she would receive assistance to transition into private rented housing. The ongoing support from her work coach, housing services, and other agencies has been instrumental in ensuring she is on track to secure stable housing. She is now in the process of improving her English and finding a part-time job so she can move into the private rented sector and start building her life. She dreams of being an Engineer. She expressed gratitude and happiness for the support she received.

**BY PAULA MAZZEO, CASEWORKER**

# CASEWORK

## CONCRETE OUTCOME AREAS

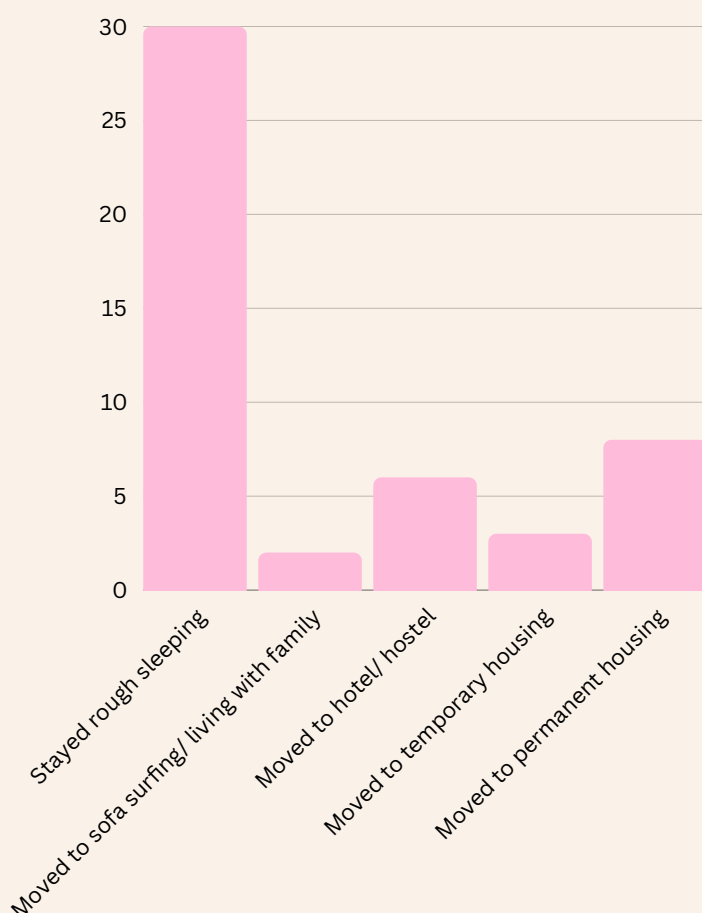
We measured concrete outcomes in the areas of housing and employment. This is our second year in a new and more systematic method of data collection and reporting.

Measuring concrete outcomes of casework can be a challenge for a range of reasons including:

- guests disengaging at the point of success because they no longer feel an immediate need for help
- guests disengaging, feeling shame about not having 'succeeded' quickly enough
- guests disengaging because their circumstances are overwhelmingly hard to deal with, they are preoccupied with 'survival' and there are knock on effects like poor mental and physical health which make engagement more challenging for them
- loss of methods of communication like access to phone or email, and change of contact details/ location

Nonetheless, our data shows some trends and some notable successes. **A key success is that 50% of guests were able to improve their housing situation, and 1/3 of guests were in permanent accommodation after 12 months or less of casework during a period of housing crisis in the UK.**

## HOUSING: ROUGH SLEEPERS



The majority of guests who we supported through one to one casework were rough sleepers.

There were 49 rough sleepers who sought out casework support.

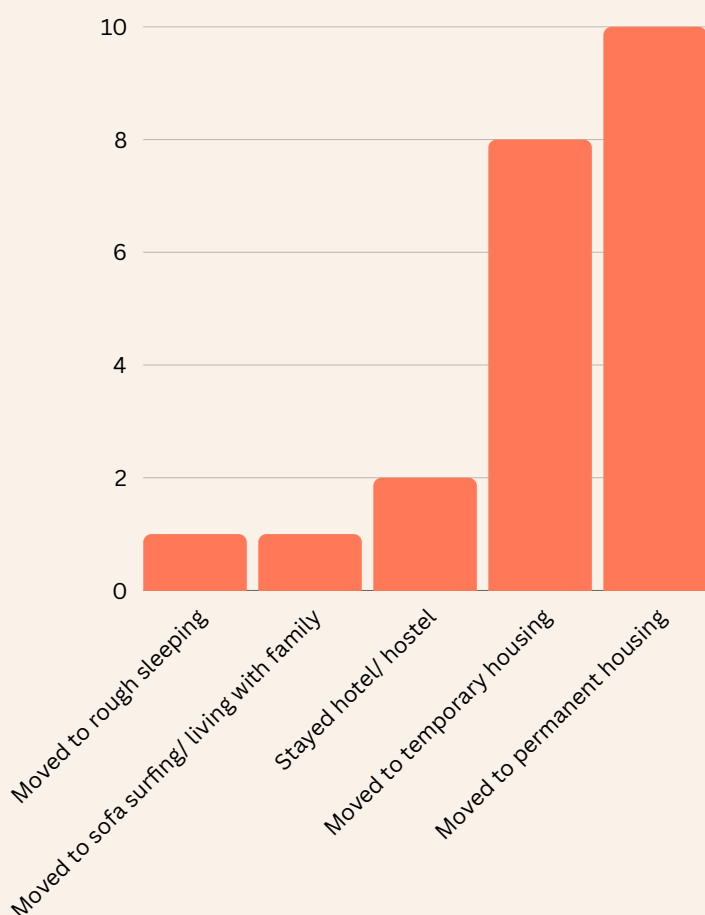
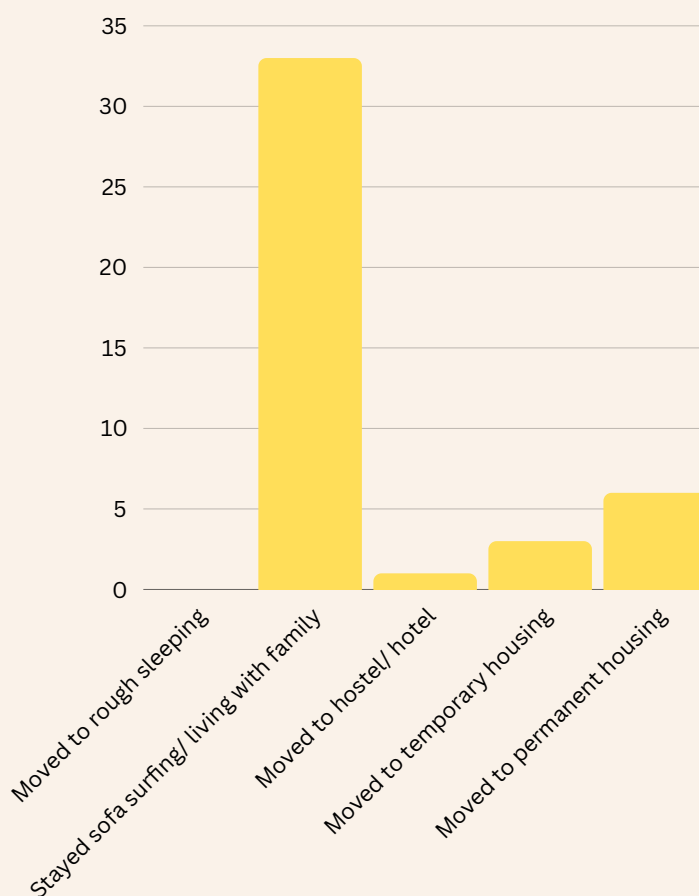
There were some notable successes. 8 guests made it into permanent housing, which represents the second largest end results category after rough sleeping for this cohort. Those who are rough sleeping are more likely than any other housing category to face the most challenging contexts such as having no recourse to public funds, no legal immigration status, poorer mental and physical health, diagnosed or undiagnosed special educational needs, or to be classed as intentional homeless.

Many of these guests feel hopeless about their situation when joining us for casework, but these results show that progress can be made, and of those still in the rough sleeping category at the end of the year, their cases may just take longer, they are not consigned to remain in that position if they continue to take on support.

The second largest group were those who started casework with us while staying with family or sofa surfing (43).

Whilst this form of homelessness may not be seen as severe and not as far from permanent housing as rough sleeping, it is often felt by the person experiencing it as damagingly precarious, yet most often a person has to be actually rough sleeping before the council will consider them homeless and step in to help.

For those who manage to scabble together places to stay to avoid sleeping outside, councils often ask for prohibitively challenging details, dating back as long as five years, of every address they've stayed at, and every name with contact details so that the people who they stayed with can verify their account. This is a big reason why it can be challenging to get quick housing results for people coming to us in this situation.

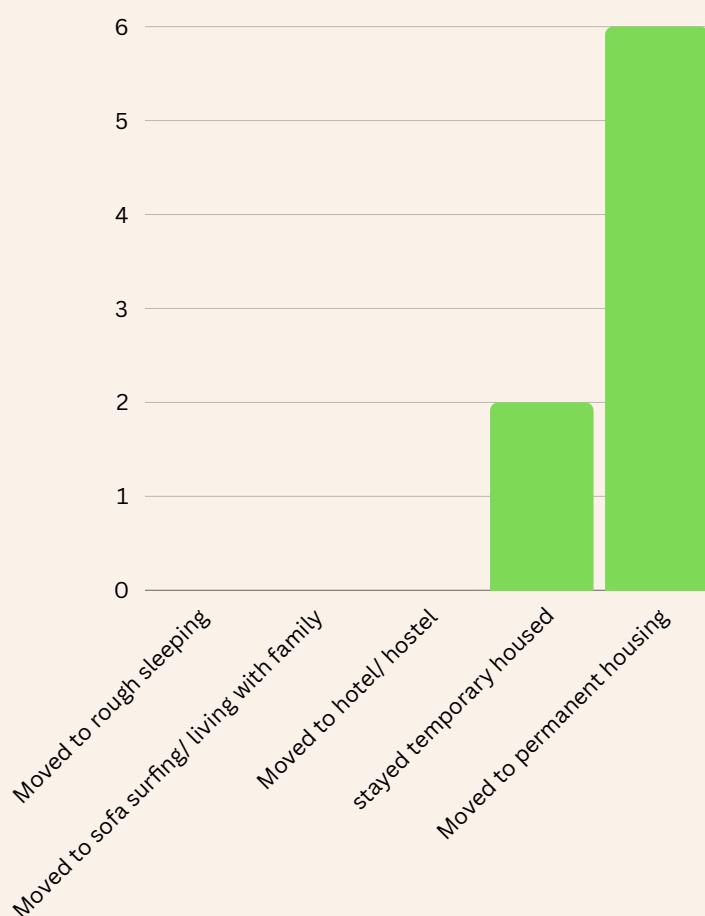


## HOTEL/ HOSTEL OUTCOMES

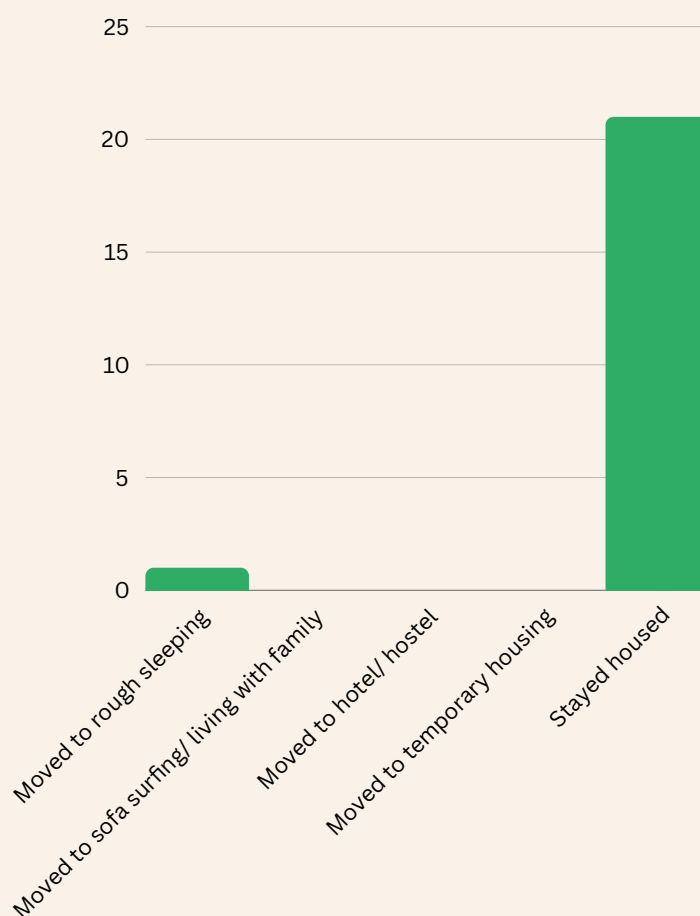
Those who joined us for casework while living in a hostel/hotel had great success through casework in moving into temporary and permanent housing.

Nonetheless, we can see that slipping into rough sleeping is possible and did happen for one person, showing just how precarious living in a hostel/hotel situation is.

## TEMPORARY HOUSED OUTCOMES



## PERMANENTLY HOUSED OUTCOMES



Temporary accommodation can be a very different experience for different people, and is well documented as being variable in its quality from being safe and providing a good environment in which an individual can springboard onto positive changes in their life more widely, to being an unsuitable environment, with multiple occupants not well suited or even safe to live together, leading individuals into relapse or into starting addictions, featuring unsound sanitation, and facilitating a downward spiral. As such, some of our guests know when their time in temporary housing is set to end, want to make a move on plan but want to or need to wait to change accommodation, or want to use the time with a roof over their head (if it's a decent place) to focus on other wider issues in their lives that they feel are keeping them in cycles of homelessness. Some guests, though, want to move on to permanent accommodation as a matter of urgency. We can see some of those wants, needs and constraints playing out in the figures for guests who joined us for casework whilst in temporary accommodation.

For those in permanent accommodation, the goal is either to stay there, to fix any issues with the accommodation if it's not right for the person, or unsafe for any reasons, or to help a person move on to a new kind of accommodation that is better for them eg into supported housing, or into a new area, or type of housing if something has changed for them. Some people will be at risk of eviction, or looking for options if, for example, they are experiencing domestic abuse and needing to safely leave their current home.



# MENTAL HEALTH

05



In 2023/2024 we started a paid partnership with **Mind in the City, Hackney and Waltham Forest**. This included provision for one to one and group therapy for guests, supervision (reflective practice) for staff, training for staff, consultancy to the CEO and capacity for ad hoc mental health support.

We knew that mental ill health was highly prevalent amongst those experiencing homelessness, but we also knew that barriers to engagement with support were high, so we accepted that our first year was about building trust for the service and allowing ways for guests to dip a toe and get comfortable, and then in year two, 24/25, we were looking to have more guests directly engaged and benefitting from the **one to one and group therapy options** we provided.

Things went exactly as we anticipated, and by the end of 24/25 we were oversubscribed, with guests now comfortable and keen to get the support they need.

We ran:

1. group therapy/coaching sessions just before our Drop In service once per month for 16 guests.
2. 1:1 therapy (between 6 and 24 sessions per guest) for 9 guests.

**100% OF GUESTS IN ONE TO ONE THERAPY SAW THEIR PHQ4 SCORES DECREASE, SHOWING A SELF-ASSESSED IMPROVEMENT IN THEIR MENTAL HEALTH AFTER 6 SESSIONS.**

**OF GUESTS WHO COMPLETED A FURTHER 6 SESSIONS OR MORE, 100% SAW THEIR SCORE DECREASE FURTHER.**

For 50% of the guests engaged in one to one therapy, the **positive changes** in their mental health also led to an **overall change** of their 'stage' on the Progress Pathway.

Where there was no change in their overall status despite the mental health support, there were external factors that inhibited their progress such as no availability of housing for them, no recourse to public funds so very limited options for concrete progress in their situations, or they were looking for work which still they hadn't found by the end of the financial year.

Nonetheless, **stronger mental health** allowed them to **cope better** with these external factors, and to be in a better position to make the most of opportunities when they did come.



# PROGRAMMES

## RESTORE - WELLBEING

Building on the success of **the pilot wellbeing programmes** we tested in 23/24 aimed at personal development, confidence building as well as physical and mental health improvement, we ran a range of wellbeing services in 24/25.

Our **Summer football programme** returned to Hyde Park, offering 21 men the chance to learn from an experienced Tottenham Club Coach, improve their fitness, bond with one another, and enjoy less structured, informal chats with staff and peer support.

This programme was aimed at guests who were not looking to work with a caseworker and make specific and concerted changes in their lives, but were looking to feel better, build social skills, have a sense of belonging to a community and improve physical fitness and health whilst going through hardship.

Football offers the chance to be part of a group without having to do much talking, and social interaction can build naturally over time around a group activity.

“

**“BEFORE YOU EXERCISE  
YOU FEEL A WEIGHT ON  
YOUR SHOULDERS AND  
ONCE YOU DO  
SOMETHING YOU FEEL  
THAT LIFTED”**

# PROGRAMMES

## RECRUIT - EMPLOYABILITY

In 24/25 RESTART started the ambitious project of creating a fully digital, accessible and inclusive **online version of the RECRUIT** programme.

This involves recording filmed sessions with experts in all things employability, from gaining different types of work, to maintaining work, making disclosures to HR around health, convictions or other issues that could make a candidate feel at a disadvantage and risk discrimination, to being a constructive member of a team and thriving in a workplace.

The sessions will be accompanied by worksheets, activities and links to other related online resources (from outside RESTART). Building this online programme was ongoing in 24/25 and will launch in 25/26.



In 24/25 we **extended our partnership with JobCentre**, retaining our existing relationship with Hoxton Job Centre Plus and working with a second Job Centre - Settle Street in Hackney.

As part of the partnership, one caseworker attends each location every fortnight to support those facing homelessness, offer on the spot appointments and take on new cases.

In the past year, we took on **34 cases** from the Job Centre and worked alongside DWP to help those individuals to be in a situation to get back into self- support through work, and to receive the right state support in the meantime.

Our work with the Job Centre, and with any of the guests who we support, is about more than helping them into work, it's about taking each guest as an individual, listening to all of the barriers and issues they are facing and supporting them to find a way to overcome those whatever they may be. It's also about helping them to work out which part to tackle first, and to plot a timeline, with milestones along the way, so that there is less overwhelm and a sense of an orderly way to move forward one step at a time.

“**THANKYOU FOR GETTING ME INTO THE COURSE. I NEVER WOULD HAVE KNOWN IF YOU HADN'T TOLD ME ABOUT IT.**”

## RECRUIT - EMPLOYABILITY - EMPLOYMENT RESULTS FOR GUESTS

We take a **housing first approach**, so employment is something we help guests to work towards at any stage, but to actually start work when they have a roof over their head, otherwise we risk setting them up to fail: work is hard enough for those of us with a safe home environment, but with anything other than that it can be impossible to hold down a job. When guests are ready, though, we are there to help them start looking and find the right career for them.

ended up...unemployed

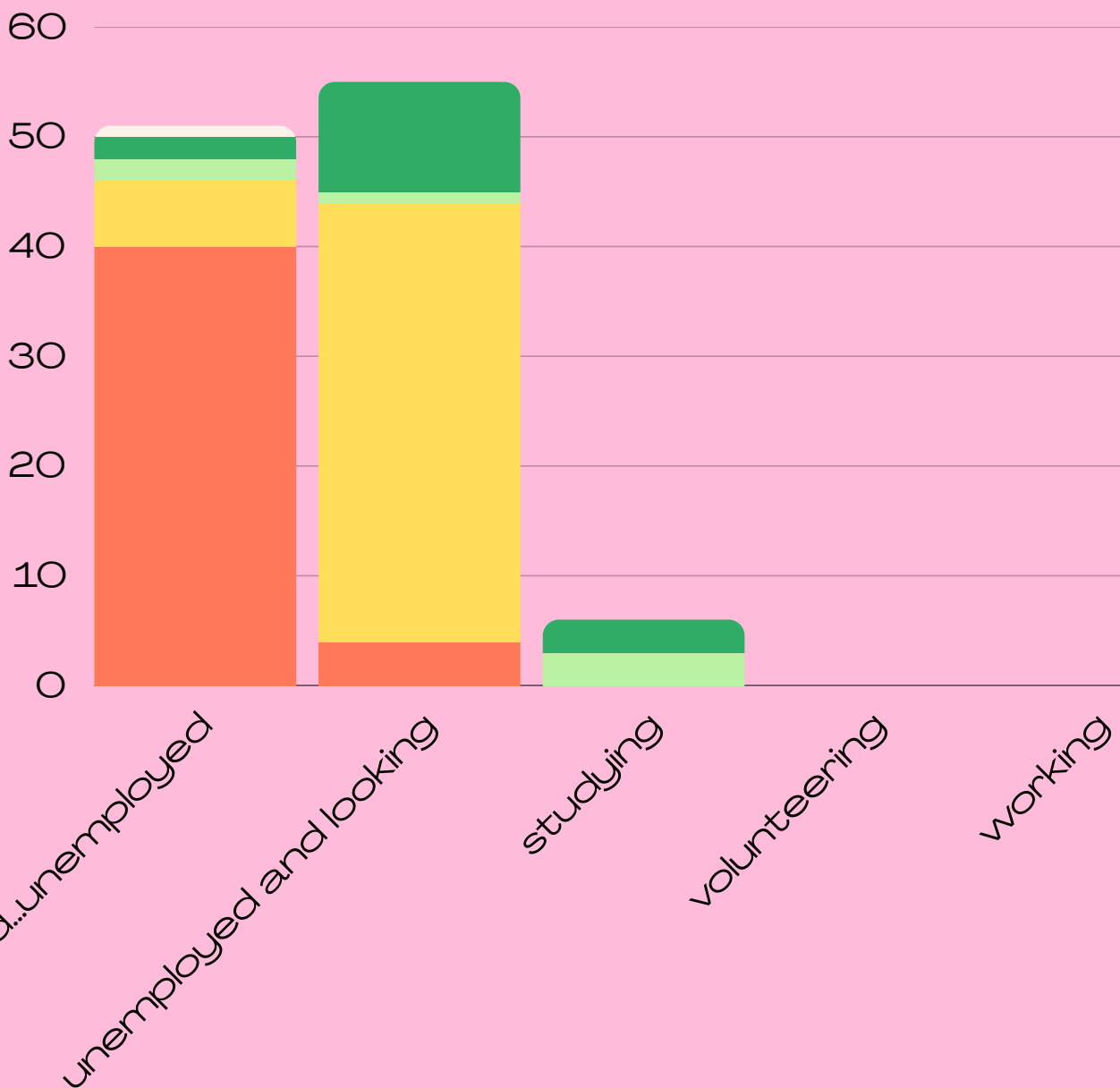
unemployed and looking

studying

volunteering

working

unable to work



## SUMMER TASTER SESSIONS

Our Summer Sessions included:

- Coproduction
- Laptop library (now run on an ongoing basis as a pop up at the Drop In)
- Info and sign ups session (to RESTART programmes)
- Mental health awareness session
- Physical health awareness session
- Women's Financial Wellbeing
- Coproduction focus group
- Therapy Dogs
- Saatchi Gallery visit (Prince William Homelessness Exhibition)
- Resource Fair





**“MY CONDITION WAS VERY BAD BUT WHEN I BECAME ACTIVE WITH RESTART LIVES I STARTED GETTING HELP WITH MANY ASPECTS. THEY GAVE ME MANY SUGGESTIONS AND I ACTED ACCORDINGLY AND EVEN THEY WENT WITH ME TO HELP ME AND FROM THERE I GOT A LOT OF SUPPORT WHICH DEVELOPED MY PERSONALITY A LOT. I WOULDN'T DO ANYTHING WITHOUT THEM. GETTING HELP FROM RESTART IT MEANS TO GET BENEFIT OF THE SCHEME SO THAT IT HELPS TO BUILD MY CONFIDENCE, WELLBEING, SKILLS AND MOTIVATION AND I WILL BE READY TO SUCCEED”**

## WINTER TASTER SESSIONS

Our Winter Sessions included:

- Resources Fair
- Coffee Course/Barista training offsite with a partner organisation
- Film Club (now run fortnightly)

Our Film Club became such a firm favourite that we almost instantly developed it into a regular service within our RESTORE wellbeing offering.

The key objectives were:

- offering a warm and welcoming space for teas, coffees and snacks out of the cold weather
- providing access to culture which those facing homelessness can be excluded from
- providing an opportunity for a non-conversational community space: somewhere to feel part of a group activity but without the need to actively socialise

74 guests attended our Winter Taster Sessions, whilst the Film Club saw 34 people coming for those sessions alone.

“

“I JUST WANT TO SAY  
THANK YOU FOR HAVING US.  
I WAS COLD WHEN I CAME  
IN, AND NOW WITH THE TEA  
AND BISCUITS, I FEEL MUCH  
BETTER. THANK YOU VERY  
MUCH FOR FILMS LIKE THIS,  
PLEASE!” ”



# SPREADING AWARENESS

In 2024/25 Restart Lives continued to show commitment to raising awareness about homelessness and the work that we do.

After appearing on the news in 23/24, in 24/25 CEO Catherine appeared on London Live to raise awareness around homelessness, present her position on policy options for change, and spread the word about the 2024 Sleepout.

The Sleepout event itself raised awareness as well as funds, with participants spending one night on the street outside the RESTART Drop In location in December. In the morning, participants shared a cooked breakfast and discussed their experience and how it changed how they might understand and reflect on homelessness.

RESTART's showreel, created by Formidable Media, was driven around the Knightsbridge area on the evening of the Sleepout, bringing images of homelessness and the RESTART message to locations such as Harrods decorated with Christmas lights.



**Catherine Flay**  
CEO, RESTART LIVES

# SPREADING AWARENESS

## WORKING WITH OTHER CHARITIES, SHARING AND LEARNING

RESTART Lives was one of five London homeless charities to learn and develop together on the topic of Coproduction, building towards creating published guidance on Coproduction best practice. The working group included, 999 club, Forest Churches Emergency Night Shelter, NEWway Project, The Passage, Overseen by Expert Link. This culminated in a conference to discuss our findings.

The most fruitful thing was understanding the different ways that charities of varying sizes and scopes could develop Coproduction.

At RESTART, it helped us to understand that we already had coproduction organically embedded in the culture, for instance guests volunteering at the Drop In, regular feedback and input opportunities, co-creation of support work plans and an ethos of genuine listening.

Olivia, our Programmes Manager, spoke about coproduction as a cornerstone of casework at RESTART and the group's work was published in a Coproduction Guidance booklet.

Invited to the event were local and national government, as well as charities, funders and other stakeholders.





# EDUCATING YOUNG PEOPLE

Last year, we made raising awareness with young people one of our reporting areas.

In line with the new focus on this, in 24/25 we reached more young people and children than ever before through assemblies, talks, classes and taking the right measures to allow more young person participation in the Sleepout event last December.

This year, we worked with:

## Knightsbridge School

Students attended each Friday of term time to set up the chairs and tables ready for the Drop In at 6.30. 10 children received the Charity Champion award for their support of the work we do. The school brought a group of daring students to join the Sleepout event, whilst some parents chose to bring their children who attend Knightsbridge school themselves to share the experience as a family.

Thomas Frank, the school's caterers, continued to support the Drop In sharing ingredients and their own chef for special meals such as Easter and Christmas.

The generous children of Knightsbridge School also hand made and wrote Christmas cards for every single one of our guests this Christmas and we shared those at the last Drop In before Christmas Day.



# EDUCATING YOUNG PEOPLE

## North London Collegiate School

We delivered a talk to sixth form girls about RESTART, why we exist, what we do, and around careers in the charity sector. We shared a lunch with members of the school's Charity Committee and other keen students who got a group together and joined us with staff from their school for the Sleepout. Many of the girls came up with creative ideas for sessions they think we should run which we will look to incorporate, with their help, in the coming year.

## Brighton Prep

We delivered lessons to years 5, 6 and 7 about homelessness and the issues that surround it. Children were empowered to share their own thoughts and ideas and to challenge one another in constructive ways.

## Weald School

Weald School have been supporters of RESTART for many years and this year donated their Easter and Harvest collections to RESTART as well as organising creative events to support the charity

We also welcomed our first ever work experience student who joined our team in the office to learn more about the various types of work that happens behind the scenes to make RESTART work. The student helped us to research small grant opportunities and to complete some crucial admin tasks.



# MEET THE TEAM



**CATHERINE FLAY**  
CEO



**OLIVIA PYLE**  
Programmes Manager



**PHIL NUGENT**  
Drop in Manager



# MEET THE TEAM

08



**ROMAN SUMAROKOV**  
Chef



**TESS DE SOUZA**  
Programmes Executive



**MARTA STYK**  
Caseworker



**PAULA MAZZEO**  
Caseworker

**AND EUGENIA NOBLE**  
Caseworker



**CAITLIN TURNER**  
Communications

# VOLUNTEERS

In 24/25 Restart Lives maintained a large pool of volunteers with over 100 individuals signed up, and just over 15 regular characters.

Volunteers undertook work like serving food, checking guests in at reception, registering new guests, promoting programmes and services, helping guests to fill in feedback forms for the charity, serving teas and coffees, running a haircuts list and waitlist, and distributing resources at resource fairs.

# TRUSTEES



Andrew Marshall  
Founder



Sonya Leydecker  
Chair



Nick Gandon  
Trustee



David Pyle  
Trustee



Pete Gibbons  
Trustee



Rob Mills  
Trustee



Mark Veldon  
Trustee



Michelle  
Rosenbauer



Marina Abel-  
Smith  
Trustee



Anand Dani  
Trustee



Emma  
Veelenturf

# STAFF WELLBEING

Working on the frontline with people who are struggling, or working behind the scenes to try to bring in the required funding to provide that vital support, or co-ordinate all of the complex efforts Restart Lives mounts to meet the challenge of tackling homelessness can be stressful and affect mental wellbeing.

In recognition of this, in 2023/24, the charity launched a staff wellbeing allowance; a monthly amount for staff to spend on activities that boost their mental health. This could be something like therapy, or it could be a trip to visit family, a gym membership, or some form of TLC that works for them.

As part of the partnership with Mind, caseworkers have weekly reflective practice sessions, and the whole team benefit from taking part in group sessions, learning mindfulness techniques, and other techniques from Mind's Radical Self Care and ACT modalities.

We continued our commitment to this staff support and training in 24/25 and are committed to do the same in the coming financial year.

In the last financial year, the team took a trip to Edinburgh, funded and supported by Carlowrie Castle, to learn more about partner services in Scotland and attend a Social Bite conference, and to take some relaxing bonding time together in the beautiful setting of Carlowrie.



# PARTNERS & FUNDERS

## OUR THANKS GO TO:

**CANACCORD and ALIXPARTNERS** for making RESTART their social impact partner.

**GARFIELD WESTON** for funding of our core costs into 25/26.

**JULIA RAUSING TRUST** for Winter support funding lasting until April 2025.

**NAPIER FUND** for awarding us unrestricted funding.

**SKINNER'S CHARITABLE FOUNDATION** for awarding us funding to support casework with domestic abuse survivors.

**CARLOWRIE CASTLE and DANI ORGANICS** for their continuing support and generosity.

**KNIGHTSBRIDGE SCHOOL** for their long term support of the charity and for welcoming us into their community.

**NORTH LONDON COLLEGIATE SCHOOL, WEALD SCHOOL and BRIGHTON COLLEGE PREP SCHOOL** for their continued support.



CEO, Programmes Manager and Caseworker gave a talk at North London Collegiate School, after which a group of students decided to attend the Sleepout



AlixPartners volunteers made the Winter Resource Fair possible, bringing a whole team to sort and then hand out vital items to our guests.

AlixPartners made cash and inkind donations to RESTART throughout the year as part of an ongoing Social Impact partnership.



Canaccord were well represented at the Sleepout with Samantha shown here braving the storm with us. Canaccord raised funds for RESTART throughout the year after making us one of their three social impact partners.

# PLAN FOR NEXT YEAR

## OUR AIMS

- Take on 30 or more new cases every quarter.
- Support 70% or more of those guests to move at least one stage on the progress pathway and to achieve at least one milestone from their personalised progress plan.
- Match or beat our housing results from 24/25 and see at least  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the guests we support with casework move into permanent housing.
- Successfully prevent homelessness in 90% or more of cases.
- Maintain the support we are offering at the Drop In.
- See an improvement in the mental health of 90% or more of guests who take up our offer of 1:1 therapy
- Prevent homelessness for those who are young or at an early stage of homelessness.
- Start offering specialist support to young people and families via casework and interventions run at partner locations.
- Offer a range of programmes on a regular basis to provide services that target our key impact areas of REACT, RESTORE, RECRUIT and REPRESENT.
- Bring our knowledge and our guests' experiences to bear on those in power and political decision makers



# PLAN FOR NEXT YEAR

## HOW WILL WE REACH THOSE

- Build on the success of outposts at the Job Centre in Hoxton and Settle Street as well as Hackney Lighthouse by running a pop up casework service in new partner locations.
- Create a small young persons and families team and begin to offer specialist young person and family advice and support at partner locations.
- Run a larger number of soft skills and wellbeing programmes from our Drop In location.
- Build up a network of Private Rented housing partners and partner landlords to offer quicker and more varied housing options to our guests.
- Expand our mental health services to make sure that 1:1 support is available to all who need it within one week of them presenting as ready and willing.
- Formalise our digital inclusion offering, making it clearer for guests and supporters to understand what is available and why this support is helpful.
- Turn RECRUIT into an online programme available for anyone to access for free via our website any time and from any place, and available for Restart as well as external caseworkers and support workers to draw on with their clients.

# PLAN FOR NEXT YEAR

## OPERATIONS, SYSTEMS AND POLICIES

- There will be an even greater focus on data collection, and the categories of data recorded will be honed further to allow for better understanding of the causes of homelessness for our guests, and of the demographics of those we support.
- New referral pathways with housing organisations and a directory of landlords.
- Safeguarding policy and processes will be updates to reflect our increased work with children and training will be complete by the end of April.

## FUNDRAISING

- RESTART Lives is for the first time running a summer fundraising event: THE BIG WALK in June 2025.
- RESTART Lives will once again run a Sleepout in December 2025.
- The charity will continue to manage relationships with individuals in the Restart community and hope to continue to benefit from individual giving support, with a view to developing a giving scheme towards the end of the financial year.
- Restart Lives will make applications for grants and funding both for specific programmes and to cover core costs.



**“WITHOUT THE CASEWORKER'S  
SUPPORT I WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN  
HOUSED AT THE TIME I WAS MOST  
VULNERABLE IN DECEMBER LAST YEAR.  
APART FROM HOUSING NEEDS RESTART  
LIVES GAVE ME LEADS AND CONTACTS  
TO OTHER CHARITIES THAT ARE VERY  
USEFUL AND PIVITOL TO ME. GETTING  
SUPPORT FROM RESTART LIVES HELPED  
ME WITH MY APPLICATION TO THE  
LOCAL COUNCIL FOR FURTHER  
SUPPORT AND ANY ENTITLEMENT I WAS  
DUE. I AM FOREVER GRATEFUL FOR  
THAT!”**



# RESTART LIVES

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