



Annual Review | 2019-20

Hackney Winter
**NIGHT
SHELTER**

 **HACKNEY
DOORWAYS**
ROUTES OUT OF HOMELESSNESS

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This has been a year of significant change for Hackney Doorways.

We launched our new three-year strategy, focusing on how we can improve outcomes for our guests. After consulting widely with volunteers, coordinators and staff, the board took the decision to move away from our historical roving winter night shelter model and look for a single venue we could call home throughout the year.

This wasn't an easy decision; our roving shelters have been welcoming our guests across the borough for twenty-five years. But we felt that the greater stability and familiarity for guests, offered by a single venue, would enable us to better support our guests and build an environment where we can grow and develop our offer.

I'd like to thank all our venues, coordinators, volunteers and suppliers who have ensured that our night shelters have always provided a welcoming, supportive and warm place for our guests, for all their work, dedication and support over many years. Also, to reassure that we remain committed to a community led model and ensuring the unique value our volunteers bring to our work and outcomes is central to our approach.

As a result of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, like many we face uncertain and challenging times ahead. But we believe with our strategy in place, what we've achieved so far and the support of volunteers and the wider community, we look forward to our 25th Anniversary year in 2021.

I'd like to thank our outgoing Director, Christina Ball, and her team for keeping Hackney Doorways open and offering support to guests throughout the year.

Andrea Daniels | Chair of the Trustees of Hackney Doorways



It has been an enormous privilege to serve as Director of Hackney Doorways over the past, albeit most challenging year.

The beginning of 2020 saw the impact that the coronavirus pandemic could have on people experiencing homelessness who were considered highly susceptible to the virus, and the "Stay at Home" order of course was impossible for those without a home to stay in.

Our unique women's shelter successfully completed its first pilot year. I'm proud that we were able to stay open throughout lockdown. Thanks to the incredible band of staff and volunteers who were able to maintain this service through incredibly difficult circumstances.

Much of the year was spent developing the charity's three-year strategic plan, learning from the past 25 years of night shelter operations, what we've been doing well and how we can positively move forward, to ensure that our guests receive a service that is appropriate to the 21st Century and affords them the dignity and support that they need to help them on their route out of homelessness.

Despite a difficult financial climate for many charities, and for us the cancellation of our two major fundraisers, the Hackney Half and the Belter for the Shelter, we were fortunate in that support increased from charitable trusts, individual donors and from the local community.

As I write this, I have moved on to pastures new, but I will retain fond memories of my time at Hackney Winter Night Shelter, and wish everyone well for the future, especially in realising the ambition for a permanent year round shelter.

Christina Ball | Director of Hackney Doorways

About Hackney Winter Night Shelter/Hackney Doorways

Hackney Winter Night Shelter is run by the Charity Hackney Doorways and has been providing shelter and support to people experiencing homelessness in Hackney since 1996.

Hackney Winter Night Shelter was originally founded by a group of local churches who opened their doors to homeless people. Each night during the winter months, one of the churches set up as a host venue for the shelter.

For many years the shelter was led and run entirely by volunteers until we started employing staff, initially link workers to support guests and a part-time administrator. The charity - Hackney Doorways - was formed in 2010. In 2020 the need for provision for people experiencing homelessness and rough sleeping is as great as ever.

Our mission is for a route out of homelessness. Our shelters provide a safe place to sleep away from the harsh conditions and danger of living on the streets, giving our guests time and space to start to rebuild their lives.

Our work

As well as shelter and hospitality, we provide support to our guests both during their time with us, and beyond.

Our Advocate Workers support guests to claim benefits, access legal or immigration advice and healthcare services. Often these are first steps on the route out of homelessness. We work with each person individually according to their circumstances and needs.

We help guests to secure more stable accommodation in different housing options including in the private rental sector, supported housing, migrant hosting services and council accommodation. Some are reconnected with their families after rebuilding relationships that had broken down.

The charity is governed by a highly committed group of Trustees, with the day-to-day management, administration and operations carried out by a small staff team.

Our volunteers

Our volunteers are key, and essential for the day to day running of the shelters, and for offering skills and expertise 'behind the scenes' to help to run the charity.

Our volunteers do so much more beyond the practical tasks of providing for the basic needs of our guests. Volunteers bring a friendly face, a listening ear and the warmth of welcome for which Hackney Winter Night Shelter is renowned.

Without our volunteers and the support of the community, Hackney Winter Night Shelter simply would not exist.

Thankyou to everyone who has volunteered with Hackney Winter Night Shelter/Hackney Doorways.

Routes out of homelessness

Our new strategic plan

Our 2020-2023 strategic plan was adopted by our board of trustees in July 2020, following a nine-month consultation and development period. The plan sets our five strategic aims:

Within Aim 1 the Board set out our ambition for Hackney Winter Night Shelter to move to a permanent 'static' year round shelter. That plan was accelerated due to the coronavirus pandemic and we have secured a temporary static shelter for winter 2020-21 so that we can keep our doors open for those who need our service and our support.

We continue to seek a permanent venue where we can offer our guests dignity and respect in a space where people feel safe, secure and supported, and where we can work more effectively in supporting our guests while they are staying with us and on their journey out of homelessness.

1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

To provide an effective and efficient service that meets the needs of homeless people/rough sleepers

To provide services and support for rough sleepers and homeless people to help them to rebuild their lives

To extend our range of move-on options for guests and continue to work with them to support them in their ongoing journey

To develop strategic partnerships with other local agencies that will enhance the lives of our service users

To continue to engage with the Hackney community to respond to the local need



Guest case study

Janet (not real name or image)

Originally from Nigeria, after living in the UK for 20 years, Janet was granted indefinite leave to remain in 2014. However, shortly after, she was put on sick leave from her job as a nurse, due to poor mental health brought on by the sudden death of her husband.

"When I was ill – I was suicidal, thinking of my late husband, I have a lot of guilt about his death," she says. "Usually, I would take care of him when he felt unwell, but he had a stroke and died. She continues, "I never want to do anything but work. When I was off sick I worked for an agency.

On returning to work, Janet was reported for working while on sick leave – something she now realises was a mistake. Because she is well educated, with two master's degrees, the court made an example of her, sentencing her to 16 months for fraud and theft. As the sentence was more than 12 months, Janet lost her indefinite leave to remain.

After serving eight months in prison, she was taken to an immigration removal centre and told she was going to be deported. Her health started to decline rapidly. She explains, "I have cardiac issues and I've had a stroke in the past. I was eating food that I shouldn't have been eating for my condition – I had no choice.

Eventually, Janet couldn't take any more and tried to take her own life. Thankfully, she was unsuccessful and after six months, she was released from the centre. But her health continued to spiral and, worried for her safety, Janet's GP quickly had her admitted to hospital. When she was discharged a few weeks later, she had nowhere to go.

"I went round and round on the bus all night," she explains. "Then in the morning I went to Hackney Migrant Centre." They helped Janet make a new appeal for her right to remain in the UK, based on health grounds, and put her in touch with Hackney Winter Night Shelter.

Janet says, "The kindness from Hackney Winter Night Shelter and Hackney Migrant Centre gave me the will to carry on. "Hackney Winter Night Shelter were excellent – they made sure I had transportation, they gave me clothes and brought me a travel card. Everybody was just nice to me. It's not been easy, especially with my health. They gave me reason to want to live again."

Janet is now living in government accommodation while she waits for her appeal for citizenship to be processed.

Our shelter venues

Our Winter Night Shelter started on 1st November 2019 and ran over two seasons, one before Christmas and one after, until the end of March 2020.

Our hosts – churches and primary schools – provided venues for the shelter, one for each night of the week. Volunteers from the local community welcomed guests, made up beds, cooked nutritious evening meals, stayed overnight, prepared breakfast and helped to create a friendly atmosphere.

As in previous years, our guests spent Christmas week with Crisis at Christmas, returning to us on 30th December. Thanks to the hospitality of church venues and the support of dedicated volunteers we were able to provide places for our guests to be during the day as well as overnight on New Year's Eve and on New Year's Day.

We are extremely grateful to the churches and schools that made us welcome in their buildings, providing the venues for the 2019-20 Winter Night Shelter season.

1. Clapton Park Methodist Church
2. Frampton Park Baptist Church
3. Green Lanes Methodist Church
4. London Fields Primary School
5. New Testament Church of God
6. Round Chapel Old School Rooms
7. Open Doors Baptist Church
8. Our Lady of Good Counsel Stoke Newington
9. St. Barnabas Dalston
10. St. James The Great Clapton
11. St. Michael & All Angels London Fields
12. St. Paul's West Hackney
13. William Patten Primary School



1



2



3



7



8



9



10



4



5



6



11



12



13

Our guests and impact

Our guests come from a diverse range of backgrounds each with their own individual and specific needs. They stay with us for a few days or several weeks and during that time we help them towards finding their route out of homelessness.

During our Autumn Season (November/December) we accommodated 27 guests (22 men and 5 women) and achieved 82% occupancy.

In the Winter Season (January/February/March) we accommodated 40 guests (35 men and 5 women) and achieved 88% occupancy.

82%

Autumn Season occupancy

88%

Winter Season occupancy

In 2019/20 there were fewer guests in total than in previous years, however guests stayed with us for longer. We saw an increased proportion of guests who had no recourse to public funds, making it more challenging to help them to move on from the shelter.

Other outcomes included help to access benefits, employment and training, access to GP and other healthcare services, signposting to immigration or legal advice. We used our discretionary assistance fund to support people with travel costs, phone credit and laundry costs. We helped people with the costs of moving on to more stable accommodation and buying essential items for their new homes.

Housing and move-on outcomes

Private rental accommodation	4
Council housing	1
Longer term accommodation (Hostels etc)	5
With friends or family	8
Our women's shelter	1
GLA hotels from end of March 2020	12
Other night shelter	1
Return to country of origin	1



Guest case study

Abeo (not real name or image)

Abeo is a Nigerian man in his 50s who also holds a British Passport. He has no substance use issues or criminal history so is considered to have low needs and to be low risk. He suffers from hypertension, managed with medication.

When Abeo was referred to Hackney Winter Night Shelter in November 2019 he had started the process of applying for Universal Credit. His biometric card had been stolen, making the process more difficult.

Abeo had recently returned from Nigeria where he went to set up a business; it did not work out, so he returned to the UK. He had nowhere to stay and ended up on the streets. He sometimes spent the night sitting or sleeping at the local hospital, just to be inside.

Abeo had been supported by the referring agency in approaching Hackney Council for support and to access privately rented accommodation. Once he entered Hackney Winter Night Shelter, we too started helping him to find permanent accommodation.

We spoke with Abeo at the shelters and had meetings at the office to make sure we were providing the best support possible. He voiced his preference for wanting to live in either a studio or one-bedroom flat and was getting anxious about his future.

In January, when Abeo heard that he would start receiving benefits in the next two weeks we made referrals to a housing association, a housing co-operative and a hostel. It took some time before a vacancy was offered, during which time, Abeo continued to stay at Hackney Winter Night Shelter. Abeo was successfully housed and moved in the first week of March.

Thank you. You are all stars in my eyes. I really enjoy the food that is provided to us and the hospitality by the volunteers. **Nice safe place to sleep. Extra blankets for those who feel cold.** I haven't been treated in all my life so well like the Hackney Night Shelters. Nice volunteers, excellent accommodation, excellent food. **Volunteers – keep the sense of humour going – keep it nice the way it is – helping, listening etc.** I appreciate every bit of your support and all involved. I am very grateful to you all. **Lovely staff. Really polite.**

Our women's shelter - The Manse House

Our first single venue shelter, part funded by The Mayor's Rough Sleeping Innovation Fund, opened in July 2019. The project was designed in response to the needs of homeless women and the unprecedented rise in homelessness, rough sleeping and 'hidden' homeless.

The dangers of rough sleeping are acute, with 8 in 10 rough sleepers reportedly being victims of crime. The risk of harm for women who sleep on the streets increases with the danger of violence, abuse, rape and exploitation. Women are underprovided for in homelessness services, yet are a highly vulnerable group.

"There is a chronic shortage of assessment services, emergency accommodation and women-only services" The Mayor's Rough Sleeping Plan of Action 2018.

Our unique women's night shelter, 'The Manse' is a four-bedroomed house in Hackney. It offers a safe place to stay for 8-10 women aged over 18 at any one time. The project is staffed mainly by volunteers. A female advocate worker provides gender-informed support to help the women to secure more stable accommodation and to signpost them to appropriate services.

We accommodated 29 women in total and between July and March had secured move on accommodation for more than 80% of those guests before the March 2020 Covid-19 lockdown was announced. We kept the shelter open during lockdown so that our guests could follow the 'stay at home' rule.

An independent evaluation, carried out in March 2020 and involving guests and volunteers, showed that the women experienced improvements in health and wellbeing, and made recommendations for continuing to run the project.

“The house was very sisterly and they saved my life, otherwise I would still be sofa surfing.”

“It took away the anxiety. It vanished. It just went away. You woke up knowing you had some place to sleep. That's how I felt. I had somewhere to go back to.”

Covid-19 and our response

The coronavirus pandemic impacted on the shelter from the beginning of March when the severity of the emergency began to emerge. Many volunteers were unable to continue to work with us. Some were shielding or developed symptoms and others were fearful of the environment.

We had two guests who had Covid-19 symptoms, one who went to hospital and was later accommodated by Hackney Council, and the other was able to self-isolate within our shelter before being accommodated in a hotel designated for those with suspected Covid-19.

When the March 2020 lockdown was announced and the “Everybody In” scheme began, night shelters across the country, where people were sleeping in unsafe communal conditions, were closed and guests were moved to hotels, funded by the government.

On the night of the lockdown announcement our guests were staying at Frampton Park Baptist Church and, thanks to the generosity and immediate response from the church, they remained there for the next few days while arrangements were being made for the move to hotel provision.

We are extremely grateful to everyone at Frampton Park Baptist Church for making us – guests and a minimal number of volunteers – so very welcome and keeping us in 24 hours a day during that time.

We continued to support those guests who moved from the shelter in hotels with regular phone calls from our Advocate Workers and we supplied them with phone credit and supermarket vouchers for additional food and other necessary items.

We continued to run the women’s shelter throughout lockdown with a smaller number of guests (5 instead of 9 women) and a much reduced volunteer workforce. We took expert advice on making the shelter safe for guests and volunteers and made arrangements for guests to be able to stay in day and night throughout lockdown.



Guest case study

Mary (not real name or image)

A refugee from Zimbabwe, when Mary first arrived in the UK she stayed with different friends, picking up odd jobs like ironing, cleaning and childcare to get by. For a time, she lived with her brother, his wife and three children in their two-bedroom flat in Luton. But the cramped conditions were hard on everyone and when her brother’s marriage began to breakdown, Mary decided it was time to move on.

With nowhere to go, she spent a long time moving between different temporary charity accommodation, including a rotating shelter where guests sleep somewhere different each night. This was especially tough for Mary, who suffers from complicated long term health issues. The moving meant constantly changing doctors and it became incredibly difficult to manage her condition and get hold of prescriptions.

She explains, “I was already ill and the way I was living, my blood pressure was getting higher – something I’m really afraid of.”

In September 2019, Mary came to Manse House, which, at last gave her some stability. On top of having somewhere to leave her belongings every day, Hackney

Doorways staff helped her to register with a GP and restart her asylum claim, which had fallen by the wayside amidst all the upheaval.

As a next step, Mary was meant to be moving into permanent government accommodation – but then the pandemic hit, putting everything on hold. Thankfully, she was able to stay at Manse House for the first weeks of lockdown.

When the government moved Mary to a Holiday Inn in Croydon, Hackney Doorways staff made sure she, and other guests, had essential packs of food, mobile phone credits and toiletries. The charity then continued to support with regular calls, food vouchers and phone credits, while working with the Greater London Authority and other charities to arrange more permanent living arrangements.

Mary is now safely living in government accommodation while she waits for a final decision on her claim for asylum.

Events and community fundraising

Two major fundraising events, The Belter for the Shelter and the Hackney Half Marathon, were cancelled this year due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

However, many corporate and community supporters put on events and fundraisers on behalf of the charity and many, many more made donations. Thank you to everyone who made a donation, our regular givers, our fundraisers and anyone else we may have omitted to mention here. Your support makes everything we do possible.

A Song for a Shelter

On Saturday 25 January, more than 400 people enjoyed a very special evening of entertainment at "A Song for a Shelter". St. John of Jerusalem church provided the venue and local technicians and performers all gave their time and talents free of charge, helping to raise £10,000 for Hackney Winter Night Shelter and Hackney Doorways Women's Shelter project.

The line-up of performers included singer-songwriter Tom Odell, Josie Lawrence, Johnny Boy Moore, Milo Maris, Kate Conway and many others, as well as students from Hackney schools.

The event organisers, Hackney Doorways trustees, Jeni Konko and Sarah Young, put together an array of acts that offered something for everyone, from classical to comedy to R&B, interspersed with stories from the night shelter performed by local actors.

Teams of volunteers on the night and behind the scenes helped to make the event a resounding success.

The Cause and Jamie XX

The Cause nightclub raised £16,000 for Hackney Winter Night Shelter. The Cause's unique grassroots arts and events space was founded in 2018 to support dance culture, London nightlife, independent businesses, and to raise money for charities.

In November party-goers gathered for a sell-out dance night at The Cause with celebrated DJs, including headliner Jamie XX, HAAi, CURL and LUCE_ to raise the money. Hackney Winter Night Shelter volunteers were among those on the guest list, invited to enjoy a fantastic night out.

Craft Beer Cares

Craft Beer Cares held their annual fundraiser in July, and chose Hackney Winter Night Shelter as their charity for this year's event.

The festival was hosted by London Fields Brewery in its Hackney arches, and brought together more than 30 famous breweries from around the world and many local breweries who gave both beer and time.

They raised an incredible £15,000 from sales of beers, t-shirts and tote bags with a team of volunteers helping to make the weekend-long event possible.

Other supporters and fundraisers included:

Americana Clash UK
Barnett Waddingham
Bindmans Llp
Chesham Arms
DL Space
Faith King Yoga
Friends Lordship Recreation Ground
Goldman Sachs Gives
Hackney Singers
Hackney Songworks
House of Hackney
Stoke Newington WI
Travers Smith
Victoria Park Players
Victoria Park Singers
Virgin Money giving
Yard Sale Pizza
Pollard Thomas

Our funds and how they are used

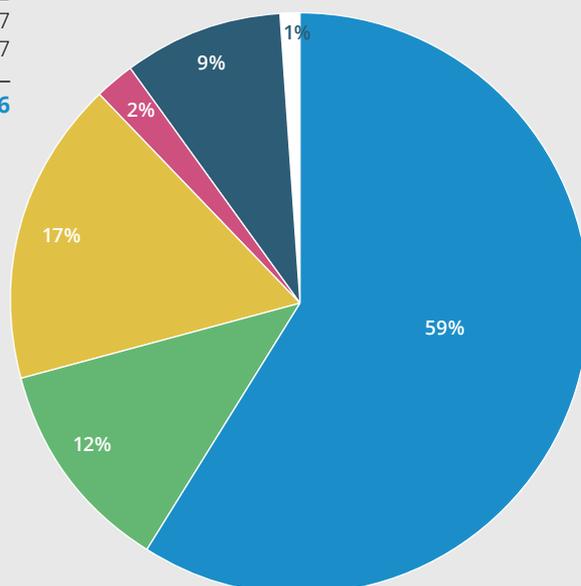
The year 2019-20 saw Hackney Doorways' highest level of income to date. Although major fundraising events – The Belter for the Shelter and the Hackney Half Marathon – were cancelled this year, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, income from grants and donations were significantly higher than in previous years.

We received gifts from many new corporate supporters and from volunteer led fundraising activities and achieved a surplus of £30,505 (compared to £57,602 in 2018-19).

Expenditure 2020

Staff costs	£159,869
HWNS Shelter operating costs	£32,214
Women's Shelter set up and operating costs	£46,197
Assistance fund	£5,992
Office costs	£24,047
Fundraising costs	£2,027

£270,346



Financial activities

For the year ended 30 June 2020

	2019-20	2018-2019
	£	£
Income		
Donations and legacies	143,851	91,772
Charitable activities	150,664	109,376
Other trading activities*	2,474	39,916
Other Income	3,862	6,281
Total income	300,851	247,345
Expenditure		
Raising funds	2,027	5,833
Charitable activities	268,319	183,910
Total expenditure	270,346	189,743
Net income	30,505	57,602

* Events income

Full accounts available on our website and on the Charity Commission website.

Thank you

Hackney Doorways would like to thank all of the charitable trusts and foundations who gave grants and donations over the year, including:

29th May 1961 Charitable Trust
AXA XL
Garfield Weston Foundation
Groundwork Tesco Bags of Help
Hackney Parochial Charities
Housing Justice
Invesco Cares Foundation
Isla Foundation
Leach Fourteenth Trust
London Catalyst
Peter Stebbings Memorial Charity
Pret Foundation Trust
South Hackney Parochial Charity
The Alexandra Trust
The Sir Jules Thorn Charitable Trust
West Hackney Parochial Charity

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