

It Takes a City (Cambridge)

Activities and Outcomes 2021/22



Somewhere to call home

Table of Contents

Summary	2
Introduction	2
Coordination and Communication	3
Coordination	3
Communication	4
Training	5
Services.....	5
Partner services	5
ITAC services	6
New Organisations	6
Hosted projects	7
Social investment	7
Young homeless	7
Annex – Crossways Journeys	8
Annex – Draft (unaudited) accounts for 2021/22	10
Statement of Financial Activities	10
Balance Sheet	10



It Takes a City

A Cambridge Homelessness Partnership

Summary

The year saw further progress in the charity's mission to bring the community together to end homelessness, working in partnership with local authorities, established agencies and new organisations, bringing in new resources and new ideas. Building on our leadership of the "Everyone In" programme established during the COVID-19 pandemic, which closed at the end of June 2021, we developed two new service offers: provision of support to former rough sleepers housed in the private rented sector, as part of the government funded Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme, and provision of a new winter offer of 24/7 en-suite accommodation for rough sleepers, replacing the traditional "cold weather and communal floors" model. During the winter 60 rough sleepers were supported and over 40 successfully moved on into next stage accommodation.

We continued to support and bring together groups focused on women's homelessness, on lived experience, on new modular housing schemes, on community initiatives, on social investment and on those with multiple disadvantages. We started a development aimed at the most vulnerable female rough sleepers. We launched a newsletter to showcase the work of partner agencies. We researched the potential of social investment to provide sustained capital for modular housing schemes. Our information website, Street Support Cambridgeshire, continued to grow, helping all district councils to add and promote their local information on help for the homeless.

Income for the charity grew to £213,267 for the year due to the growth in services delivered, mainly funded from restricted grants and contracted payments. As in previous years, the charity did not undertake any meaningful public fund-raising. We acknowledge with thanks grants from Cambridge City Council, from DLUHC / HomelessLink / Housing Justice, and from NPT Transatlantic, together with some substantial individual donations, which supported our key projects during the year.

We also acknowledge with thanks the large number of organisations and volunteers that we have worked with during the year, too many to record in detail but without whom It Takes a City would not exist.

Introduction

It Takes a City is more than just this charity with the name. Launched at the It Takes a City Cambridge Summit on Homelessness in November 2018, we did not aim to grow large, operate services long term, or have a big infrastructure that requires sustaining. Our aim is to facilitate change and development, bringing many organisations together in new ways, and securing new resources, to end rough sleeping due to homelessness in Cambridge and the surrounding areas. We hope that is evident in this report, which focuses on the activities undertaken and the outcomes achieved during the year.

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated many changes already under way, perhaps the most significant being the transformation of the extra winter provision for rough sleepers from the "cold weather only plus church floors overnight" model of past years to winter round accommodation using individual en-suite bedrooms. Our partnership model provided a wrap-around service tailored to each person. This proved especially helpful to some entrenched rough sleepers, preventing what might previously have been an almost inevitable return to the streets. In the [Annex](#) we illustrate some of their stories.

We acknowledge the support of many partners in the report, but we do not mention everyone. Nevertheless, we are grateful to all.



It Takes a City

A Cambridge Homelessness Partnership

Coordination and Communication

Coordination and Communication is the foundation of our work, both as services in their own right, and as the means to develop new initiatives. We are very grateful for grants provided by Cambridge City Council (a 2021-22 Homelessness Prevention Grant), and by NPT Transatlantic, in support of this aspect of our work.

Coordination

Action Groups are at the core of our work. We bring together key individuals, organisations and groups from across the community to focus on a specific issue affecting those experiencing or at risk of homelessness. This collaborative model enables us to identify potential solutions and, if required, the best people to take these projects forward.

The following summarises the vital work of our Action Groups during 2021/22:

Women's Homelessness Action Group (WHAG)

The WHAG met regularly throughout the year, providing a forum for discussion of issues specific to women and homelessness. ITAC facilitated these meetings, providing support for the Chair and Coordinator. We also created a [dedicated page](#) on our website and regularly promoted the WHAG via social media channels. The group coordinated practical help for the female rough sleepers housed in our Crossways winter emergency accommodation project.

Towards the end of the year, we helped the WHAG bring together a long-held ambition to invest in the development of an off-street respite centre for vulnerable women. We worked with the group to generate a business proposal with a vision for the project and a costed feasibility assessment which we agreed to support using our development fund to engage a consultant.

Youth Connects Action Group

The **Young Futures Partnership** was launched on 1st January 2022, formed from members of our Youth Connects Action Group. The principles of co-operation, coordination and information sharing developed in the group became embedded in the new jointly commissioned City Council / County Council service, and the Action Group was therefore closed during the year.

Coproduction Group

The Coproduction Group provided an open forum for those experiencing homelessness to meet with their peers and key workers/support groups at St Paul's Church and discuss issues of concern, not just for individuals, but the homeless community more generally.

The meetings were facilitated by staff from CGL and SUN Network, with ITAC providing support as requested. Our Coordinator worked with these staff to help develop an approach based around subject specific sub-groups, including ongoing research into digital exclusion and how it affects people experiencing homelessness in Cambridge.

Developing the link between this and the Community Action Group will be a priority in the year ahead.

Business Action Group

The COVID pandemic made communication with, and coordination of the Business Group difficult. Businesses were concentrating on keeping afloat and the 'Everyone In' initiative meant that rough sleeping had become much less of a visible issue in the city centre.

It Takes a City

A Cambridge Homelessness Partnership

Discussions with Cambridge BID and other contacts suggested that businesses were looking for clear information and guidance, rather than meetings focused on generalities.



ITAC, in partnership with Cambridge BID, Cambridgeshire Police, Cambridge City Council, local businesses, those with lived experience of homelessness and the Cambridge Street Outreach Team, produced the [Sharing Spaces](#) guide. We also organised a webinar to launch the guide and provide a forum for attendees to raise concerns. This was then made available to view via our YouTube channel – [It Takes A City \(Cambridge\) - YouTube](#).

We intend running more of these events throughout 2022/23.

Community Action Group (CAG)

The CAG was formed in March 2021 to provide an opportunity for individuals and groups to coordinate their support for those experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Membership is drawn from a broad range of community, student, faith and charitable groups. An early outcome was to reduce the focus that many partners, especially student groups, had on (inadvertently) supporting street based living, and instead to work with ITAC and others on supporting rough sleepers on their housing journey.

One problem identified was the scope of work required to settle a rough sleeper into new private rented or social accommodation, which tended to come unfurnished and unequipped. A simple [directory](#) of all sources of furniture and equipment was collated and added to our website. We aim to develop an end to end process and guide to assist any worker supporting such a move.

To ensure this collaborative approach continues to focus on the issues of greatest concern, clearer links between CAG and the Coproduction Group have been established. The next area to be addressed is digital exclusion and how to improve the connectivity and confidence of those in need.



Communication

Website and social media

With excellent pro-bono design and technical support from Cambridge Creative we launched a brand new ITAC website – www.ittakesacity.org.uk – which provides opportunities to promote the work being done by partners and ourselves. The focus is on what we are all doing together.

Street Support Cambridgeshire

Street Support is a platform developed by Street Support Network Ltd in Greater Manchester enabling local areas to host information, organised by type of help, postcode, availability, eligibility, etc, on the support available to homeless people and to advertise opportunities to help those organisations providing the help. In October 2019 we launched Street Support Cambridge and in 2020 we extended it to cover the rest of Cambridgeshire, with the kind support of the wider local authorities.

A Street Support Operations Group was established in March 2021 to enable staff from the five local authorities, (Cambridge, South Cambs, East Cambs, Fenland and Hunts), to identify organisations offering help and ensure their details were added to the website.

It Takes a City

A Cambridge Homelessness Partnership



Street Support Cambridgeshire

From September 2021 until March 2022, we conducted a thorough review of the information on the website and contacted all listed organisations to confirm their details were up-to-date. We also made recommendations to the national Street Support team on how the user experience could be improved.

As COVID restrictions eased and footfall in Cambridge increased, we launched a Spring '[3 Streets](#)' campaign across our website, social media channels and local radio stations. The campaign aims to encourage the use of [Street Support Cambridgeshire](#), [Street Link](#) and [Cambridge Street Aid](#) to both find help for those in need, and offer time, items or money via the 'Give Help' section.

Newsletter

During the year we launched a newsletter, published every couple of months, showcasing the work of our partners and ourselves and encouraging further engagement and partnership working. The latest edition is [April 2022](#) and you can [Subscribe](#) to receive future editions.

Social media

Our social media feed [@ittakesacity](#) is active and is another way to receive the newsletter. We maintain a presence on [LinkedIn](#). Do join either or both.

Broadcast media

We appreciate the interest in our work, along with that of our partners, shown by BBC Radio Cambridgeshire and by Cambridge 105. Our Coordinator and Community Engagement Manager, Matt Nelson, is a regular contributor to both.

Training

We were successful in obtaining DLUHC funding from the Rough Sleepers Initiative, via Cambridge City Council, which enabled us to coordinate and develop, working with MEAM, HomelessLink and the SUN Network, further training on coproduction and trauma informed services provided free to partner organisations. 16 attendees, including some with lived experience, benefitted from the sessions.

Services

Services developed within the above (and former) Action Groups are taken into action by one of three means: a partner organisation that is a member of the Action Group takes it up, or we take it up, or a new organisation is set up by Action Group members to take it up.

Whatever the route, we continue to promote these projects, help with funding and/or fund-raising and ensure they form part of the overall wraparound for rough sleepers on a street to home journey.

Partner services

The [mentoring service](#) that we initiated two years ago and was taken up by [CHS Group](#). This is a key component of the service offer provided in our accommodation and support projects. During 2021/22, 14 people experiencing homelessness were helped by trained mentors.



It Takes a City

A Cambridge Homelessness Partnership

The **employment outreach service** that we initiated two years ago and was taken up by **CHS Group**. Another key element of the service offer provided in our accommodation and support projects. 17 people were helped during 2021/22.

The provision of pastoral support by Rev. Sophie Young, the **Bishop's Officer for Homelessness**, through the **Cambridge Churches Homeless Project**

ITAC services

Everyone In – we began this government funded programme in March 2020, in partnership with Cambridge City Council, ultimately helping c. 300 rough sleepers off the street during the pandemic. During the 2020-21 winter we used Masters House, an 80 en-suite bedroom vacant student accommodation unit kindly made available by CATS Global Schools. This year we brought the programme to a successful conclusion during a “run-off” period from April 2021 to June 2021. All 34 rough sleepers present at the start of the period were offered move-on accommodation, and no one had to be evicted by the time the project closed.

Community support – initially as an extension to Everyone In, we continue to support a small number of former rough sleepers in self-contained accommodation with meals and practical help.

PRS20 – support to up to 20 rough sleepers in self-contained accommodation funded by the rental element of DLUHC's Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme. We were commissioned by Cambridge City Council to provide support to landlords and tenants, to ensure that the tenancy was maintained, if necessary to secure a managed move to more suitable accommodation or, as a last resort, back into supported housing.

Crossways – provision of 24/7 emergency accommodation from 1st November 2021 to 31st March 2022, replacing the traditional “cold weather and church floors” model of past years. We are grateful to CATS Global Schools who enabled us to use one of their vacant student accommodation units, a 20-en-suite bedroom property with excellent communal space and facilities, a 2-bed flat and a secure courtyard. We led a jointly funded project with Cambridge City Council, bringing 56 rough sleepers into the project across the winter, and securing positive move-ons for 40 of these. The provision of our wraparound support model, and good partnership working with many local organisations, gave hope and new options to some hitherto entrenched rough sleepers. We acknowledge with thanks an enabling grant from DLUHC's Winter Transformation Fund, via Housing Justice and HomelessLink, the many volunteers from the Cambridge Churches Homeless Project and from St Andrew's Street Baptist Church who provided all daily meals and domestic support. And Herbert, the visiting therapy dog, was a huge success.

New Organisations

It Takes a City Community Land Trust (CLT)

The CLT is an independent charitable community benefit society set up by members of our Housing Connections Action Group, which has now closed. The ambition is to develop a number of **supported housing schemes** for former rough sleepers using modular technology on permanent and “meanwhile” land. The CLT has several sites in its pipeline, working with landlords including Cambridge City Council, Diocese of Ely and the University of Cambridge. These schemes will provide supported accommodation for rough sleepers in the early stages of their housing journey, and for some, for the longer term. We are hosting their [website](#) and will continue to provide a communications platform and resources within a common brand identity.



It Takes a City

A Cambridge Homelessness Partnership

Hosted projects

We are willing to host projects on behalf of others that fit within our charitable objects. During 2021-22 these included:

Social investment

We secured funding from a sponsor to initiate a project looking at the potential for social investment to provide sustained capital funding, and potentially revenue funding, for local housing and support programmes. In the first instance, the capital requirements of the modular housing schemes being developed by the CLT. The project concluded that a sustainable model required a target broader than the CLT's own requirements and a second stage project has been developed, to be jointly funded by Cambridge City Council and the CLT, to research the wider needs and potential for social or blended investment to address homelessness and other city priorities..

Young homeless

We worked with a group of land, property and construction interests led by the Howard Group to shape and find a way to host a new programme to provide supported apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeships and affordable housing to young homeless people. We concluded that the programme is best hosted by the It Takes a City Community Land Trust and their Board is developing the detailed project proposals. The programme is reflected within the above Young Futures Partnership.

Chris Jenkin BEM

Chair of Trustees

July 2022

Annex – Crossways Journeys

As the Crossways project was closing, we asked Chris Dade and Emma Rule, two of our amazing team, to reflect on some of the guests who had stayed with us. Many were experiencing multiple disadvantages and had become entrenched in the street lifestyle.

We hope you will find the following stories inspiring. They show how offering dignity, privacy and kindness can help somebody begin to turn their lives around and imagine a better future. None of this would have been possible without support from our incredible network of volunteers, partner organisations and the City Council. (Names have been changed)



Jenny and Mike

Jenny and Mike are a couple who had been rough sleeping for many years and were suspicious of any help previously offered. Both had addiction issues and Jenny suffered greatly from trauma caused by historic domestic abuse.

Jenny and Mike were offered a room at Crossways, a chance to get warm and reset. The team were pleasantly surprised when they accepted. Jenny arrived full of anger. However, over time she began to relax, spending more time in the lounge, even telling Emma that their room felt like home.

They abided by the rules of the project and their street presence reduced. Both agreed to script as they were supported in making a housing application for a City Council rough sleeper property.

A package of support has been offered as Jenny and Mike take the next steps on their housing journey.

Jane

Jane suffered long term domestic abuse, forced into street begging by her coercive partner who would pocket the proceeds. He decided the location and kept watch to ensure compliance. Deeply traumatized, Jane was mistrusting of anybody trying to help.

The Street Outreach Team made contact and Sophie Young began visiting Jane every day, trying to build trust. Although initially resistant, Jane eventually agreed to visit Crossways, no pressure. After briefly returning to the streets, she accepted the offer of a room.

With multi-agency support, Jane was able to break the cycle of coercion, take control of her finances and begin engaging with mental health services. Crossways gave Jane a safe space to rest and gain strength. She was supported in making a priority housing application.

Pavel

Pavel is a man in his fifties, originally from Poland. He had worked continuously since his arrival, until he developed long COVID. Unable to cover his bills, Pavel was evicted by his landlord with nowhere to go.



It Takes a City

A Cambridge Homelessness Partnership

With limited English and no experience of street life, Pavel was found by the Street Outreach Team frightened and disoriented. Crossways provided him with safety and privacy. With emotional support from the team, he found renewed pride in his appearance and began to imagine a better future.

Pavel was placed in Jimmy's move on accommodation, where staff described him as a 'brilliant guest'. Whilst there, Pavel befriended another Polish man and they have been supporting each other on their journey.

Pavel is now looking for employment and his own front door again.

Femi

Femi is a man, originally from West Africa, who was struggling with severe mental health issues. He was sleeping rough outside Addenbrookes when the Street Outreach Team made contact. As is often the case with people who have been on the streets for long periods, Femi was suspicious and reluctant to accept help.

Eventually Femi came in to Crossways, only leaving of his room to get something to eat. Slowly, as he began trusting the team, Femi engaged more and shared some of his story.

Intensive support from multiple agencies helped Femi build the confidence to begin the process of securing the necessary papers and passport from his home embassy in London in order to establish his right to remain in the UK. The City Council's housing team can then assist Femi to apply for benefits and make an application for suitable accommodation. CCHP has agreed to provide Femi with temporary accommodation in the interim.

Reflecting on all the support the amazing network of agencies and volunteers had given Femi, Emma said, 'The environment and atmosphere created at Crossways has helped him begin his journey'.

Annex – Draft (unaudited) accounts for 2021/22

Statement of Financial Activities

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	2022 Total
INCOME	£	£	£
Donations and legacies	15,153	119,600	134,753
Income from charitable activities	45,508	33,005	78,514
Other Income	-	-	-
Total Income	60,662	152,605	213,267
EXPENDITURE			
Charitable activities	49,747	153,576	203,323
Total Expenditure	49,747	153,576	203,323
Net (expenditure)/income for the year	10,915	(971)	9,944
Funds brought forward at beginning of year	13,156	21,175	34,331
Funds carried forward at end of year	24,071	20,204	44,275

Balance Sheet

	2022
CURRENT ASSETS	£
Cash at bank and in hand	65,720
Debtors and deposits	2,983
	68,703
CURRENT LIABILITIES	
Creditors	(24,469)
NET CURRENT ASSETS	44,234
	44,234
Fixed Assets	41
NET ASSETS	44,275
Represented by:	
Unrestricted	24,071
Restricted	20,204
	44,275