



Help Bristol's Homeless

Together, we can make a difference

What is our purpose? (The clue is in the name)

- Our aim is to change the face of homelessness in Bristol
- But not on our own
- Another clue is in our slogan
- **“TOGETHER, WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE”**



All well and good but...

- Why is there a problem?
- What does Help Bristol's Homeless do?
- Covid-19!
- The future for HBH
- What's it all got to do with me?



Homelessness is a big problem in today's society

- You will have seen homeless people - the rough sleepers, the people in doorways, the people in tents
- You might have seen the teams of volunteers that go out to feed them and give them sleeping bags and things like that. These are “outreach” groups and Bristol has several
- They help people on the streets survive being out there, but they don't solve the problem – the people are still homeless!





How many homeless people are there in Bristol? In Britain?

- Anyone can Google this and find lots of numbers for people who are officially recorded as homeless. But this is far from the full story
- Who do you count? If you are going to count rough sleepers, you have to find them first
- What about the sofa surfers?
- Often, those on the official lists are the ones who have gone to the council and registered themselves as homeless
- But they are not the only ones who are actually homeless
- There has been a 330% rise in the number of people accessing homeless services during the past 12 months in Bristol say Bristol City Council...



Who are the homeless people anyway?

- They are people just like you and me
- But who have found themselves in terrible circumstances
 - Broken marriage
 - Lost job
 - Impossible home environment (e.g. domestic violence)
- Perhaps also due to them taking some wrong turns in life
 - Alcohol or drug dependency
 - Gambling addiction
 - Criminal record
- They are **people** who need help



Imagine this ...

- Imagine that you are 18
- You mess your exams up and decide to stay in college to try for better grades
- Your mates have left college and are earning money and having a good time
- Before you know it, you're doing stuff with them, spending money you don't really have, not studying as you should – this is all driving your parents mad, tensions rise and there are lots of arguments
- Things get so bad that you leave home (or get kicked out)
- So here you are - officially an adult, trying to sofa surf, but your mates' parents are getting fed up, so it gets harder and harder
- Actually, you are homeless but don't want to admit it
- How long before you find yourself sleeping rough?



What would you do?

- Surely you have other family?
- What if your extended family lives somewhere else?
- What if they have their own problems?
- What if you're too ashamed to ask them?
- Can't you get a job? Oh sure, bound to be some job somewhere that will pay minimum wage ... right?
- Well maybe, but you even if you could get one, where will you live on that?
- You get the picture, and this can all happen very quickly



Could this be you, or a friend?



Hold on, what about hostels?

- Hostels are available but they can be intimidating
- Some people may not feel safe sleeping in the same room with strangers
- Hostels have limited capacity and are really very short term solutions



So, what does HBH do?

HBH gives people a “leg up” to get their lives back on track

The HBH Spring Street Project provides:

- Somewhere safe and comfortable to stay – for six months
- An address, very useful for ...
 - Getting a bank account
 - Registering with a doctor and dentist
 - Applying for benefits
 - Applying for jobs
- A community, companionship, friends ...
- Support with finding work
- An **opportunity** for people to improve their mental health, to regain self-confidence, and to move on with their lives



How it all started ...

- Jasper started doing outreach, providing food and drinks, first of all by hand but then from a van
- Jasper spoke with the homeless people, and asked what they really wanted
- They were honest, they said that a sandwich and a cup of tea wasn't really enough
- They wanted a home
- Jasper decided to do something different, not just outreach but making homes for homeless people
- HBH was born!



The Malago Road site (the first location of HBH)

At the old Malago Road site there was:

- An old double decker bus for short-term residents – the 360 Winx bus
- Several fully fitted self-contained micro flats (converted from old shipping containers)



(A brief digression ...)

How do you turn a shipping container into a micro-flat ?

- The next pictures show briefly how it goes from when we get a shipping container to what we do to it
- Much of this is done by volunteers, or is paid for by generous sponsors
- We have to pay for some things like sandblasting the outsides and spray foaming the inside, but the rest gets done by people coming to site to help
- We get donations of kinds of things that we need, from windows to flooring, to showers and kitchens, to furniture and toasters















The Spring Street Project, Bedminster – HBH's new home!

HBH moved in Summer 2019

We now have a little village of micro-flats!

- There are 17 micro-flats
- The Sleepover Pod for short-term stay
- A kitchen (with trained chefs!)
- A dining room
- A laundry room
- A shower block for the street homeless
- The new Well-Being Centre

It is a gated community, so everyone can feel safe, and get their lives back on track













LAUNDRY RULES

- * ENSURE YOU CLEAN UP AFTER YOU USE THE LAUNDRY ROOM
- * TAKE CARE OF YOUR OWN BEDDING, TOWELS AND CLOTHING
- * THE AIRERS AND IRONS ARE FOR YOUR USE. RETURN TO LAUNDRY ROOM WHEN FINISHED WITH. PLEASE REPORT DAMAGE OR LEAKS TO THE OFFICE



Inside the 360 Winx bus ...



How does the Spring Street Project work?

We generally offer places to homeless people who have been referred to us by other organisations, e.g. BOSH (Bristol Outreach Services for the Homeless), St Mungos, Bristol City Council, Spring of Hope refuge, HM Prison, probation services, SSAFA, Royal British Legion, other councils to name a few.

If they are they are offered a micro-flat it is for

- Maximum of 6 months
- Residents pay rent, and buy their own food etc

HBH is heavily dependent on a small team of volunteers and donations.



So who can we help?

Obviously we deal with homeless people. But our residents are all single people, not families, not couples, not pet owners

When it comes to getting help from the council, single people are the lowest priority, so we try and help them

We have both men and women

We have had a wide range of ages – so far from 18 to 63

We can help people who are willing and able to help themselves

(We do love pets, but we don't have the resources to deal with them at the moment)



And who can't we help?

Unfortunately we are not able to help every homeless person

If people are actively using alcohol or drugs, then we can not help them

- It is not fair on our existing residents, who may be recovering from drug/alcohol issue themselves

If people have significant mental health issues, then we can not help them

- It is not fair on our existing residents, who need a safe and quiet place to live

Sadly, there are some people, who need to be getting specialist help that HBH can't offer



Where does the money come from?

That's a really good question!

- It takes money to buy and convert the containers
- Plus the Spring Street Project costs money to run day-to-day

Money comes from:

- Generous sponsors – from individuals to very large companies
- Fund-raising – from school children baking cakes, sponsored challenges to large events
- Grants from other larger charities
- Rent from residents



Doesn't the government or council help?

This is a complex and potentially controversial issue, and HBH is not aligned with any political party or movement.

However, it is safe to say that Government funding for homelessness-related services has reduced year after year. Also, Central Government funding to local councils has also reduced over recent years.

Bristol City Council does not provide direct funding to HBH, but has given us the use of the land on Spring Street for 5 years (starting in 2019)

The Government does provide people with benefits, such as: Job Seekers Allowance and Housing Benefit. However, the process to claim the benefits is not always easy, and it's made harder if people don't have a bank account or a fixed address



Covid-19 – Initial response

Initially, the likely impact and seriousness of Covid was very unclear

HBH decided to go into lockdown about 2 weeks before official “Lockdown 1”

Introduced measures such as:

- All residents to follow Government guidelines – “hands, space, face”
- Installed hand-sanitizer stations
- Replaced tea towels with paper towels
- Limited visitors to a minimum
- Health declarations for visitors *et cetera*
- Use of fogging disinfection of micro-flats

The situation has been pretty much the same since March 2020



Covid-19 – Tangible impacts - 1

360 Winx bus:

- Restricted use from maximum of 12 people, to one person upstairs and one person downstairs
- Pre-Covid ...
 - the bus was full every Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights
 - there were typically seven guests on the other four nights
- That's 64 "bed usages" per week, reduced to 14
- Although we no longer have the bus, we made use of it the best we could during this time

Micro-flats:

- Actually not much impact, as they are single occupancy
- We have had several people move on – e.g. moved to council flats or out of the area for work
- Also have been able to accommodate a few new people



Covid-19 – Tangible impacts - 2

Fund-raising:

- Badly affected!
- Easter Fair – cancelled
- Art Auction – cancelled
- Summer Fair – cancelled

Corporate volunteering days - cancelled

Well-Being Centre – everything delayed

Dining Room closed to street-sleepers

Kitchen closed for a while



Covid-19 – Positive things!

Generally, people at HBH have stayed healthy

We've still been able to offer accommodation, albeit to fewer people

People have moved on from HBH and gone into employment

We've supported BOSH with Christmas shoebox appeal and Christmas Eve outreach

We've still been able to offer use of showers and laundry to street-sleepers (by appointment via BOSH)

We support BOSH by supplying hot meals for street sleepers



Covid-19 – More positive things!

Incredible generosity from the community – e.g. deliveries of pre-prepared meals when kitchen closed

New Well-Being Centre, now being used every week

New micro-flats and plans for a couple more

The art auction took place successfully

Plenty of volunteers lined up for the future



The future ...

What's next for HBH?

- More services planned for the Well-Being Centre
- The idea of converting shipping containers into micro-flats is generating a huge amount of interest in other parts of the UK and abroad
- We'd like to be able to convert our own containers, for our own use and to sell to other organisations
- We have limited room to expand at Spring Street
- But wouldn't it be great to have a larger site, with land to grow our own fruit and vegetables?



Word is spreading ...

The internet makes The World a small place, and word of Help Bristol's Homeless has spread to New Jersey in the USA

In February 2020, Jasper was invited to go to New Jersey and meet with senior officials about what HBH has achieved and how it helps people

The HBH slogan is "together, we can make a difference"

"We" doesn't have to be a local "we" - it can cross borders, continents, races, religions and whatever other differences we humans find to make our lives complicated!



What's it all got to do with me?

That's largely up to you

- At the very least you now have better awareness of people who are less fortunate than you are, and how other people are helping them
- Do you want to help?
- This could be volunteering work, fund-raising work, or just spreading the word about the problem society has with the number of people who are homeless



Our details ...

Web site: <https://helpbristolhomeless.org/>

Address: Help Bristol's Homeless Project

Spring Street

Bedminster

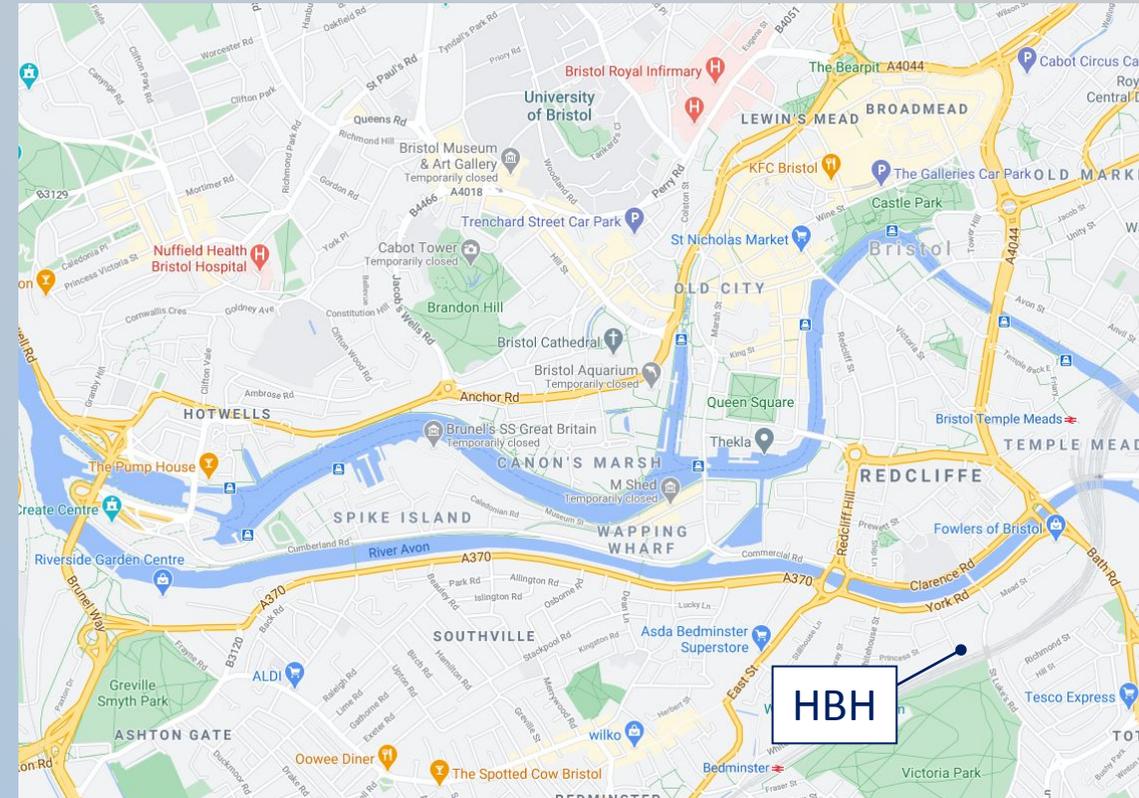
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Charity number 1181386



We believe that having a home is not an entitlement, it is a RIGHT. Everybody should have the opportunity to live in a place they can call their own.

Thank you for your time

