

Hope into Action Cambridge

We are extremely grateful to The Beer-Harris Memorial Trust for funding our support of individuals suffering from severe mental health difficulties in our homes since 2016 in Cambridge. Year by year we grow across the UK, and we now have over 105 homes, partnering with 105 churches and housing over 350 tenants.

At Hope into Action Cambridge, we now manage 13 homes, housing around 44 tenants, including 19 children. We have a team of 6 (1 Team Lead, 4 Empowerment Workers and 1 Ops & Admin).

- **Brief history of the charity**

Hope into Action UK, founded in 2010, is a charity that partners with churches to house the homeless across the UK. We exist to house and support vulnerable men, women and families who have experienced homelessness. Every house that it is opened is in partnership with a local Church. Every tenant that we house is provided a befriender (a Church volunteer), who provide extra support alongside the Empowerment Worker (support worker) from Hope into Action. Our theory of change is that if we provide safe and secure homes and good positive relationships, then it will provide the best foundation for tenants to bring about holistic change.

- **Details of project supported by BHMT grant.**

For 22/23, BHMT funding has helped cover the cost of supporting two of our female tenants in one of our homes. We employ trained Empowerment Workers who work with all of our tenants, and it is a key part of our model. The total cost of supporting two tenants for a year, is £4,596.48.

The total Empowerment Worker costs to support this female three-bedroom home is £7,421. We had already raised £5,250, Therefore, we applied for £2,171.

- **Areas of mental health addressed and profile of the recipients.**

Our Empowerment Workers are trained to both, respond to signs of mental health illness, support tenants who are struggling, and then sign-post to the relevant services for professional therapeutic support. BPD (borderline personality disorder) PTSD, anxiety and depression are all common illnesses our tenants deal with, particularly among our female tenants. Many have had a history of domestic violence, sexual violence, and childhood trauma.

Both tenants (that we requested funding for) suffer from complex mental health needs having been subject to childhood trauma and abuse from a young age. For one particularly this has been her first 'safe' home for many years, and she feels now for the first time, she can slowly start receiving the therapeutic help she needs.

These are some words about her previous support worker:

"One of the best women I have ever met and the strongest asset of my recovery."

- **Impact of the project**

Over the last 12 months, both tenants have engaged and remained in their tenancies. Recovery from trauma and complex mental health issues is complicated and therefore any tenancy is not going to be straightforward. Towards the end of the year, due to a staff member moving on, we recruited a new support worker. For one tenant particularly this was a positive change and there have been many things to celebrate. She is now engaging with her GP around therapy, has enrolled onto a college course and is engaging better with her tenancy. However, hoarding tendencies have put her tenancy at risk and her support worker continues to encourage engagement with this.

The 2nd tenant has had many ups and downs. At the start of the year, she felt ready to move-on and started engaging with this process. After a few unsuccessful housing applications, the stress of this contributed to a panic attack. She was finding the process too difficult and triggering. She requested to extend her tenancy to more than the normal 2 years. We felt this was the best course of action as she didn't feel ready to move on. She has found some stability despite difficult family relationships and a lack of support outside of her church befriender and Hope into Action Empowerment Worker.

- **3-4 supporting pictures, photographs, illustrations.**

- 2 photos of the garden at the home, lovingly looked after by one of the tenants

- 1 photo of a recent training day for new church group befrienders.