

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 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.**

This grant was to support 2 tenants in a brand-new home opening this year. As the grant was successful in October 2023 this funding was earmarked to be used across the year from October 2023 to October 2024 (rather than to the end of this financial year). Therefore, the home is not yet open. Refurbishment recently started and we expect the house to be open for tenants to move-in, early summer.

Across the work of Hope into Action Cambridge there has been much to celebrate over the last 12 months. Your continued support allows us to fund our Empowerment Workers (we have to fundraise for our Empowerment Workers every year). They work directly with our tenants, most of whom suffer with mental health illness.

- **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.

Here are some case studies (name anonymised)

- Mark came to us at the age of 21 after a difficult period at a local hostel. He suffered with long term anxiety, depression. He was diagnosed at childhood with ADHD and struggled to control his stress, which often led to anger issues and blackouts. His tenancy with us gave him the stability he needed where he was able to find some support with his mental health and also start receiving therapy around childhood trauma and other difficult life experiences.

Sadly, more recently he has also developed epilepsy after a head injury at work. This has led to regular seizure sets that have been very dangerous for him. We are able to offer him safe and secure accommodation and extra wrap around care to support him through these new health difficulties. His church befriender sees him regularly and has visited him and helped with travel to and from hospital. His family are not local and so the main support he has is his befriender, Empowerment Worker and also some nearby friends. His Empowerment Worker has supported him to access benefits like Universal Credit Limited Capacity to Work and also PIP. Having these in place has given him more financial freedom and more independence.

- Sarah came to us at the end of 2023 after leaving an abusive relationship. The stress and trauma of this was causing her a lot of mental health difficulties and she was struggling to engage with support. She had also recently become abstinent from regular substance use, a symptom of the very difficult situation she was in. With the support of her Empowerment Worker, she has started to engage with debt support, have some stability in a tenancy and start looking for employment again. Her mental health has improved, and she has stayed abstinent from substance use.

- **Impact of the project**

Your funding has allowed us to continue forward with opening a brand new 2 bed home in central Cambridge. This home will open early summer and will be welcoming it's first tenants shortly after. With the cost-of-living crisis and more and more people accessing local housing services this provision is vital in the city of Cambridge. We look forward to sharing the impact on this home once the home is open.