

"Homelessness is not a housing problem, it is just part of a diverse and complex social issue exasperated by a lack of understanding, willingness to address the problem by communities and a historic lack of correctly attributed funding to tackle the roots of the problems – not just poverty but mental health, alcohol and drugs abuses, amongst others.

In the UK, our failing in society is often to just provide short-term solutions to tick boxes and not also invest in long-term remedies."

## Info Pack

HELP US MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Catching Lives is an **independent** local charity dedicated to supporting the **homeless**, vulnerably housed and destitute in and around Canterbury and making a difference to help people **off the streets** and back to society.



## Patron of Catching Lives: The Archbishop of Canterbury

“when I was hungry, you gave me food;  
when I was a stranger, you took me into your home”

One of the first invitations I received on becoming Archbishop of Canterbury was to become Patron of Canterbury Open Centre, now part of the Catching Lives charity.

I was delighted to accept, because the centre’s success shows what can happen when caring, compassionate and determined people see an opportunity to put the message of the Gospel into action.

I commend the Centre for its determination to tackle homelessness, and for the creative way in which all seek to find new ways of giving help and support to its clients.

Rowan Cantuar

Lambeth Palace, London SE1 7JU

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## Welcome To Catching Lives...

If you have received this pack it is because there is a way you can help us tackle homelessness, as well as the destitute and vulnerably housed in and around Canterbury who have nowhere else to turn.

I believe we all have a responsibility to our community to tackle these problems. Myself, my team, our supporting partners and a small army of volunteers are dedicated to end the harm and damage caused to individuals and communities through homelessness, rough sleeping and insecure housing in our local area.

We have all seen homeless and destitute people on our streets, particularly in Canterbury. Some of us stop to think, perhaps help, whilst many put our eyes down and walk on. We choose to help tackle this problem and build a better future. Whilst many choose this way of life, and for many reasons, there are others who have fallen through the cracks in society, systems and charities set up to address these problems. It is these who need our help most in Canterbury and many have problems we can immediately help them address to break the cycle.

## Success...

The following pages will give you a succinct overview of the charity, its work and successes, however over the last six months alone Catching Lives has helped house nineteen individuals into secure accommodation - improving their future and perhaps saving their lives.

## Independent...

Being an independent charity we are not bound by bureaucracy or heavy overheads. All the money we raise is put to good use and directly helps those in need by funding services and maintaining our Canterbury Open Centre by Canterbury East train station.

Without a need to adhere to often hindering Government red tape and extra costs, Catching Lives is able to show what can only be described as charitable entrepreneurship. We are able to engage freely with both the public and private sector, add new services - like our dentist and GP service - and meet the very real human needs we see.

## How You Can Help...

Catching Lives is a self funded charity and looks to partners, sponsors, public donations and volunteers to continue the charity's work and success.

Whether you, your company or your organisation would like to contribute to our fundraising effort we thank you and ask you contact our fundraising team ([info@catchinglives.com](mailto:info@catchinglives.com)) or marketing partner, Think Agency, in Canterbury - [press@thinkmg.com](mailto:press@thinkmg.com) / 01227 808046.

For companies, our marketing team are on hand to help you gain the most out of your support and we encourage you to meet with them and visit our Canterbury Open Centre to see for yourself the valuable work we are doing.

All the best

**Ewan** (General Manager, Catching Lives)



## Success...

- Many of our current volunteer group are ex-service users of this charity.
- We have re-homed over 30 service users in 8 months.
- We have re-homed people in as little as two or three days.
- All service users are given a comprehensive assessment process.
- Our mental health team have directly intervened in extreme cases where people have been living by roadsides for three years or walking around in winter without shoes or adequate clothing.
- We have offered NHS training to volunteers and service users alike.
- We have recruited volunteers to become members of staff.
- We have an awareness program which we have delivered to groups, churches, schools and various other organisations.
- We offer access to services which we have increased since re-opening.
- We fund our staff to train within the field and increase the skill set of the team.
- We have an ex-service user on our board of trustees.
- We offer placements to students from UKC and Christchurch University.
- We have directly funded 5 repatriations for service users to their area or country of origin.

To find out more successes, including this months statistics, please visit [www.catchinglives.org](http://www.catchinglives.org)

## Some telling statistics...

- 30% of local homeless people have mental health problems

- 80% of homeless people suffer from alcohol abuse

- A local survey said just 3 people are living homelessly in Canterbury!!! (our recent survey showed the figure is closer to 30)

- Catching Lives sees between 15-20 homeless or vulnerable people at the Canterbury Open Centre a day



# About Us



Catching Lives is an independent local charity dedicated to catching the lives of homeless and vulnerably housed people in Canterbury who have, for many reasons, fallen through the gaps in society and who feel they have nowhere else to turn. We provide them not only help but with solutions.

Catching Lives works to help end the harm and damage caused to individuals, families and the community by homeless rough sleeping and insecure housing.

Catching Lives offers immediate respite plus basic human needs from its Canterbury Open Centre, located by Canterbury East Station. From here the charity works with the daily service users in tackling their issues or quickly finding access to accommodation and put an end to their street living.

The dedicated team at the centre, some of whom themselves have experience of rough sleeping, are expert in dealing with the many serious issues which the visitors have or are still facing, whether alcohol, drug and domestic abuse, mental health issues or just a quick downward spiral in their home lives.

Catching Lives works closely with partner organisations, other support charities or through specialist case workers within the centre. The centre also offers access to medical and dental services – care which is often impossible for the visitors to access anywhere else.

The majority of people who come to the outpost centre are from the local area, the majority of those are homeless. Catching Lives will immediately work to get them housed as soon as possible in managed or unmanaged accommodation.

Every person who seeks help from Catching Lives has a different and often tragic story and are looking for helping hands where others turn them away. Although we provide daily human needs, such as food, sanitation and clothing, our aim is to help them get back to society and towards a new beginning.

As an independent charity we are able to meet very real needs which are often not catered for by national agencies. Our ability to help people immediately, assess their issues and needs is the major factor behind our success.

Catching Lives also works within the Canterbury community to educate and raise awareness of the issues and barriers faced by the people we help.

As a charity we rely on donations, volunteers and fundraising from within the local community to help us make a difference and improve not just the lives of the visitors we see but the wider community through reduced rough sleeping, crime and anti-social behaviour.

# Canterbury Open Centre

The Canterbury Open Centre, funded and managed entirely by Catching Lives, is open from 9am - 1pm Monday to Friday and provides a range of invaluable services to our daily visitors.

The centre is staffed mostly by volunteers, including students, retired people and even nuns, who help run our kitchens, clean or often just sit and talk with the visitors to the centre. Something as simple as spending the time to have a conversation with our visitors helps greatly improve their confidence - essential in helping them build better lives and futures and something we and our partners are focusing on.



## Services

Foremost the centre provides some essential basic human needs, including; breakfast and lunch (made from donated food), showers and washing facilities and donated clothing, footwear and blankets/ sleeping bags.

The centre also offers some key new services, including; access to in-house mental health care workers, case workers and now dentist and GP services.

## Visitors To The Centre

When new visitors come to the centre our expert team quickly look to find out as much about the visitor as possible, their problems, their needs and their housing situation.

The vast majority of our visitors are from the Canterbury area, some are following what we recognise is a homeless circuit around parts of the country, some are newly homeless following relationship breakdowns or financial problems but all have problems we can help.

Those that are newly homeless we take the most concern over, as we know we have a window of opportunity to get them off the streets before it becomes habitual and deeper problems result.



## Building Confidence and Life Skills

For many of our visitors, having lived rough or vulnerably for such a long time, the greatest barriers they face getting their lives back on track are self-confidence and the life skills needed to look after themselves or even get a job. Catching Lives, through the Canterbury Open Centre, is funding new projects to tackle both these issues.

## Visiting The Centre

We honestly welcome any visitors, whether having dropped in or phoned for a convenient time to come along. We will show you the facilities the centre has and are improving all the time plus we are happy to give you more insight into the work we do.

# About Nigel



Below is an account of how Catching Lives has, and continues to, significantly help homeless, vulnerably housed and destitute people whose lives have spiralled out of control - often by their own admission - on a path

to an early grave. The following is not an isolated story but just one account of how through Catching Lives not only providing basic human needs, but also tackling the root cause of someone such as Nigel's problems, can readily help catch and then save people's lives...

Nigel, an ex-serviceman, had everything he wanted in life; a successful career in real estate, a partner and was also happily teaching English as a foreign language in Thailand. Tragically his life was turned upside down when he was betrayed by his partner and the victim of a vicious attack, leaving him in intensive care for three months. While he was in a coma, his partner stole all of his money and belongings before disappearing, leaving him financially bankrupt, completely isolated and alone. Five months later, he left hospital and returned to the UK with only £16 to his name and little hope of justice. He was also left with permanent disabilities to his back, shoulders and legs as a result of his injuries.

After many attempts to gain support and compensation for his ordeal, Nigel was forced out onto the streets of London and suffering from a Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Nigel spent his days begging, something he says, "Even in my desperate state I found incredibly embarrassing. Only through alcohol could I cope with the reality of the situation". On the streets, always cold and constantly fearing for his own safety and survival, his alcohol addiction spiralled until he was drinking 20 cans of beer and half a bottle of vodka a day, finding himself taken into hospital unconscious from drink at least once a week.

## Catching Lives Help

Having now faced numerous harsh winters fending for his life (after six years of living on the streets of Crawley, Chatham and Maidstone), Nigel heard of a service which would lead to him turning his life around in the space of six months.

Catching Lives provided not only shelter, warmth and food, but somewhere to shower, change his filthy clothes and take blankets and sleeping bags. More than anything the shelter offered his first sense of safety since being on the streets, something Nigel says "meant I did not even want to drink".

Catching Lives offered Nigel the support, guidance and encouragement he needed to give up his addiction and begin looking towards gaining secure accommodation and beginning to rebuild his life. From the Canterbury Open Centre, Nigel worked with Catching Live's designated Mental Health Care Nurses in dealing with his addiction and Post Traumatic Stress.

Catching Lives offered Nigel the support, guidance and encouragement he needed to give up his addiction and begin looking towards gaining secure accommodation and beginning to rebuild his life. From the Canterbury Open Centre, Nigel worked with Catching Live's designated Mental Health Care Nurses in dealing with his addiction and Post Traumatic Stress.

Ultimately it was Nigel's own will power and determination that allowed him to turn his back on his previous problems. Now studying a refresher course to continue his teaching career and planning a subsequent degree course, Nigel believes "The Centre and its team help you to build a newfound positive attitude, self-confidence and drive to build a new life".

# Fundraising / Donating

Catching Lives is an independent charity and almost entirely self funded. Aside from funding for our mental health care nurses we currently receive no other support from national bodies or government and in the current economic climate are not relying any short to medium term central funds to be made available to access.

As such, we rely on fundraising efforts and donations from community partners, companies and individuals to continue the work we do.

## Fundraising Areas

The various fundraising activity we do can be broken down as follows:

### Donations

**One-off donations** – These we greatly appreciate and can help us improve our facilities, kitchens and help fund new projects. Whether you can donate a £1 or are happy to help meet the cost of a capital expenditure as your donation we are incredibly grateful. You can donate securely online via PayPal, send us a cheque (please tell us more about yourself) or hand a donation in at our Book Palace charity shop on Palace Street (find out more about our shop at our website online).



**Monthly donations (by standing order)** – a simple and easy way to support Catching Lives by donating either £1, £2 or £5 per month which goes direct to helping fund our daily services and the Canterbury Open Centre. You can download the form below or you can visit either the Canterbury Open Centre or our charity shop (The Book Palace) in the City Centre.

### Sponsorship

Catching Lives is keen to welcome local business or corporate sponsors who are able to help sponsor events, activities or programmes we offer. We have a marketing team here available to speak and meet with you and help you maximise the publicity from your involvement – please email: [press@catchinglives.org](mailto:press@catchinglives.org) with your full details.

### Advertising

Catching Lives offers a number of advertising opportunities to local businesses, including display advertising on the main ring road for exposure to over 10,000 people per day. To find out more about this and other opportunities please download our advertisers pack.



# Contacting Us

Website: [www.catchinglives.org](http://www.catchinglives.org)

## Catching Lives / Canterbury Open Centre

Canterbury Open Centre

13 Station Road East, Canterbury, Kent CT1 2RB

Tel: 01227 455 320 Email: [info@changinglives.com](mailto:info@changinglives.com)

## Catching Lives Enquiries

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## Catching Lives Fundraising

Marketing Partner / Think Agency, Canterbury

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Tel: 01227 808046 Email: [help@changinglives.com](mailto:help@changinglives.com)

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