

IMPACT REPORT

2025



2024/2025

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INTRODUCTION



**EMMA
JOHNSON**
CEO UnityMK

Welcome to Our First Impact Report

As you read these pages, I hope you are encouraged by the real and lasting difference your generosity and partnership with us is making in the lives of our guests every single day. Together, we are restoring hope, providing dignity, and opening doors to empowered futures. Helping people move away from homelessness toward stable housing, meaningful community, and opportunities to truly thrive.

How We Began

Fifteen years ago, a conference brought local people together to respond to the growing challenge of homelessness and rough sleeping in our city. It was there that the concept was agreed — to provide emergency beds during the coldest months of the year. The aim to prevent deaths on the streets. This marked the starting point of what would later become our charity, Winter Night Shelter Milton Keynes.

Today, we are known as UnityMK, a name chosen intentionally to reflect that it takes us all as a community working together to end homelessness in our city.

Why Our Work Matters

The need for that unity has never been greater. In Milton Keynes, a commemoration service honoured those who have died over the past three years while on their journey out of homelessness. Eighteen poignant names were read aloud, each representing a person with hopes, dreams, families, and the potential to contribute meaningfully to our society.

Nationally, homelessness remains one of the most urgent and devastating social challenges of our time. Statistics released earlier this year by The Museum of Homelessness recorded 1,611 deaths of people experiencing homelessness in the UK during 2024 — a heartbreaking 9% increase on the previous year. On average, four lives are lost every single day.

Our Mission

At UnityMK, our mission is simple yet profound: to break the cycle of homelessness by providing pathways of support which empower people to feel valued and connected, to find home, and to thrive.

Because of people like you, UnityMK is more than a support service, it is a true community where you are welcomed with kindness. Your support helps create practical solutions that give people real pathways off the streets, while strengthening a network built on compassion and action. At the heart of everything we do is a belief you share with us: that when people from all walks of life come together with empathy and purpose, meaningful change is not only possible, it happens.

INTRODUCTION

Looking Ahead

As we look ahead, we are approaching a pivotal moment in our journey. While we will continue operating from our current centre at Unity Park Station until at least April 2027, MKDP has given us notice to leave the building. Our priority is to deliver Phase Two of our Hub based in Wolverton, creating a modern, welcoming base for our day services by spring next year. This project offers a vital opportunity to increase the range of support we provide at a time of growing need.

As our plans take shape, we invite you to begin thinking about how you — or your organisation or connections — might be part of this next chapter. Whether through ideas, expertise, partnerships, or future support, collaboration will be key to ensuring this development moves forward and strengthens our ability to help more people toward safe and stable accommodation.

A Shared Commitment

As I reflect on the year, I am continually inspired by the resilience of those we support, the generosity of our partners, and the tireless dedication of our volunteers. Together, we are not only building services that empower our guests — we are offering hope, belonging, and pathways toward a more secure and meaningful future.



REVIEW OF THE YEAR

Thanks to your continued support, we maintained and strengthened our core homelessness services at the Unity Park Station Homelessness Centre throughout the year, alongside the delivery of our seasonal Winter Night Shelter, which provided essential refuge during the coldest months.

The Unity Park Station Centre operated five days a week and remained the central hub of our homelessness support. Key services included a daily Breakfast Service for people experiencing rough sleeping, supporting up to 26 individuals each day, and a Drop-in Service assisting around 40 people daily with access to food, hot drinks, showers, laundry facilities, and personalised support. Over the course of the year, volunteers prepared more than 18,000 hot meals, supported by contributions from New Life Church's Community Club and our Compassionate Café initiative, where local businesses provided weekly lunches. Additional services included counselling, Foodbank access, and specialist recovery, immigration, and advice services delivered in partnership with organisations such as ARC, AA, and Migrant Help.

From November to March, the Winter Night Shelter provided emergency accommodation for up to 15 guests each night across eight rotating venues, each offering a freshly prepared evening meal. The shelter supported 38 individuals, with 32 successfully moving on to more stable accommodation. As the profile of those accessing our services evolved, we adapted our provision to ensure it remained inclusive and responsive, including facilitating prayer times during Ramadan and hosting Polish-language recovery meetings. This work was strengthened by a significant increase in volunteer engagement, growing from 120 to over 450 individuals, enabling a compassionate, community-led response that would not be possible without your kindness and generosity.



85%

Positive move on rate



18,000

Hot meals served



450

Volunteers

CRISIS SUPPORT

Our Homelessness centre serves as a hub for organisations throughout Milton Keynes, offering wraparound support to guests who are homeless or at risk of becoming so. Approximately 15 external organisations use the facility to deliver vital services, including help with welfare and housing, recovery from substance use, mental health support, and initiatives to reduce isolation and loneliness.

Signposting and Referrals: Our Welfare Team connect guests to vital tailored support networks, ensuring individuals can access the right help at the right time.

Support: Our welcoming, drop-in culture reassures guests that compassionate, non-judgmental support is always available. This consistent presence builds trust and fosters meaningful, long-term relationships.

Food Provision: We provide essential breakfasts and lunches that support physical health, and overall well-being.

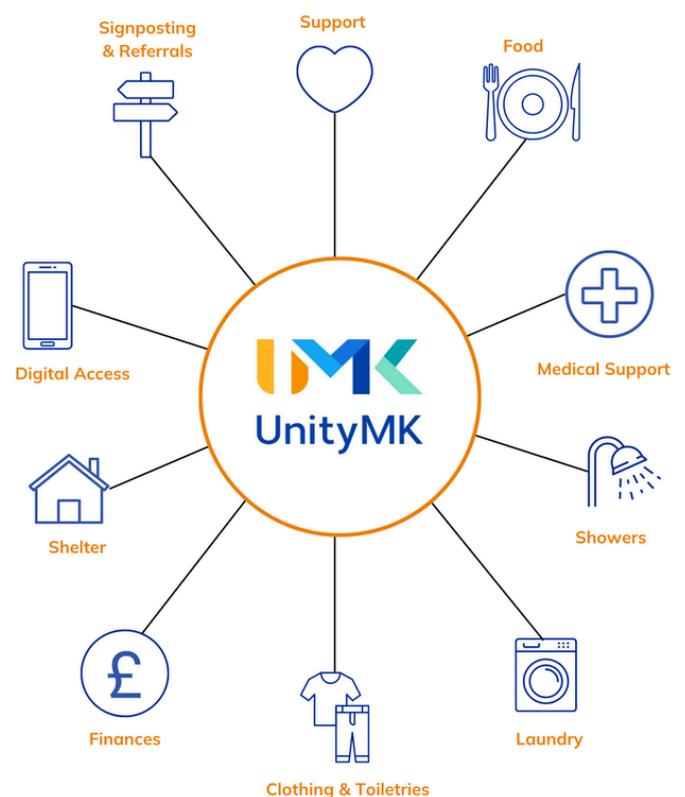
Medical Support: On-site First aid triage improves health outcomes, reduces reliance on emergency services, and strengthens trust between guests and staff.

Showers, Laundry, Clothing and Toiletries

Access: Access to hygiene facilities and clean clothing restores dignity, improves health, and is vital in helping guests maintain employment and stability.

Finance: We assist guests with obtaining ID and essential documentation, enabling access to benefits, bank accounts, and financial services. This support helps individuals regain financial control and work towards long-term stability and pathways out of homelessness.

Homelessness Centre



Emergency Shelter: Our emergency winter beds provide immediate safety and a gateway to longer-term housing. This is supported by rapid referrals to Milton Keynes City Council's Rough Sleeper Team, coordinated by our Welfare Team.

Digital Access: Where possible, we provide phones, SIM cards, charging facilities, and access to laptops. This enables guests to stay connected with support networks, access essential services, and take an active role in their journey away from homelessness.

PREVENTION & RECOVERY

4 PATHWAYS APPROACH

Accommodation

Meaningful Work

Community

Personal Development

Developing our 4 Pathways approach to Prevention & Recovery will be a central focus in the year ahead. These pathways (Accommodation, Community, Personal Development, and Meaningful Work) provide a flexible framework tailored to each guest’s needs. Within each pathway, guests are offered a range of options that support them in finding a stable home, accessing safe and supportive spaces, restoring dignity, and ultimately thriving as valued members of their community. As guests move into more stable accommodation, our team will work closely with them to identify the next steps in their journey, whether that’s enrolling in training opportunities, joining community groups, or pursuing personal goals aligned with their chosen pathway.

It is important to us to support our guests with their goals. For example, last year, we supported a young man in his early twenties who was experiencing rough sleeping and focused solely on finding employment. By working with him and addressing how sleep and hygiene challenges could affect job success, he became open to exploring housing options. This led to a successful referral to supported accommodation, providing a stable base to start his journey into work.



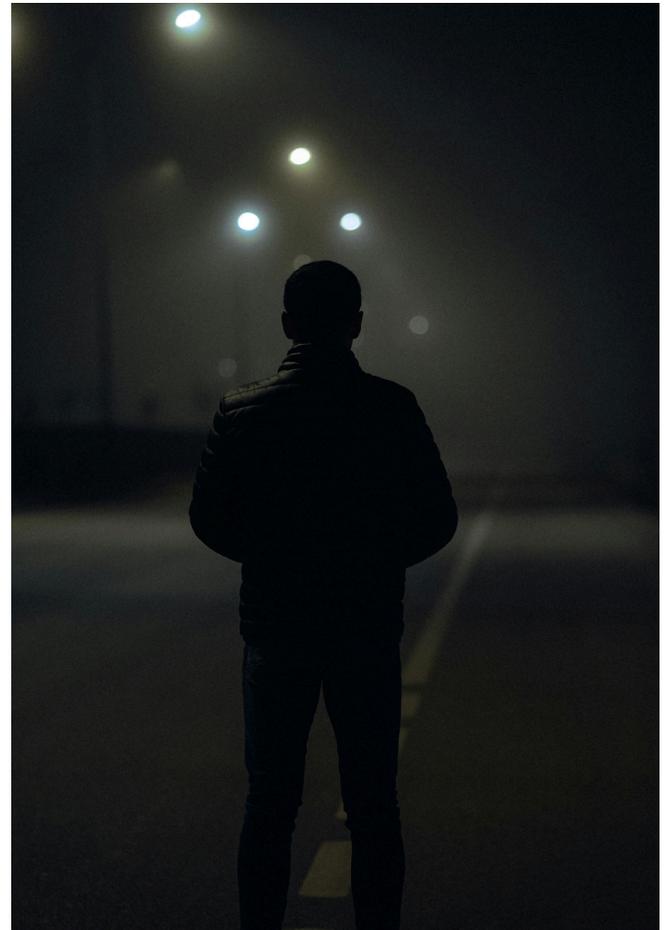
GUEST STORIES

Meet Stephen

Stephen* came to us after a family breakdown left him without a place to stay. Unable to return to his previous home, he found refuge in our winter night shelter. From the start, he was proactive, working closely with his council navigator and taking meaningful steps toward a better future.

However, after being involved in an off-site incident, his bail conditions prevented him from staying in our shelter, forcing him back into rough sleeping. Despite this setback, Stephen remained determined. One day, he visited our crisis centre and asked our welfare team for guidance on finding private rentals. They spent time showing him different websites, and before long, he had managed to secure himself a place to stay.

Recognising that his drinking had become a problem, Stephen also reached out to ARC (Addiction Recovery Community) and is now on a waiting list for rehab. In the meantime, he actively participates in regular sessions with our on-site counselling service.



Stephen's journey is a testament to how, with the right support and encouragement from our experienced welfare team, individuals can empower themselves to create lasting change and redirect their future.

*Stephen's name has been changed to protect his anonymity.

'I enjoyed my time with the winter night shelter (UnityMK) as it got me off the streets during the winter period. I am very grateful for the help I received.'

Life saving accommodation
Life giving support



18,000

hot meals served



450

volunteers



1,995

lifesaving beds



172

hours of onsite
counselling

Milton Keynes Homelessness



3,084

people estimated to be homeless

1 in 93

people in MK are experiencing
homelessness

Data drawn from Shelter's December 2024 study

Food Provision

15

people access our rough
sleeper breakfast each day

123%

increase in guests accessing our
food bank in the last 3 months

Winter Night Shelter

38

Guests supported

84%

Positive move on
rate

28

average number
of nights stayed
with us

Homelessness Centre

200

average number of
people accessing our
services each week

80%

guests are
experiencing mental
health challenges

2000

average number of
showers provided at our
centre each year

GUEST STORIES



Meet Rachel

Rachel* found herself facing homelessness when her landlord unexpectedly reclaimed the property she had been renting. Although she was working at the time, the soaring cost of rent meant she couldn't secure an affordable new home. With no other options, Rachel was forced to sleep rough in Campbell Park. The stress and instability of life on the streets eventually led to the loss of her job.

Determined to change her circumstances, Rachel reached out to UnityMK for help. We were able to offer her a bed in our night shelter, giving her the safety and stability she so urgently needed. From there, our welfare team referred her to The Shelter MK — a local service offering longer-term accommodation and support for those experiencing homelessness. The referral was successful, and she has since moved into her new home.

Rachel's journey has been incredibly challenging, but thanks to her resilience and the right support at the right time, she is now rebuilding her life with renewed hope and security.

*Rachel's name has been changed to protect her anonymity.

Scan to hear more from other guests in their own words, via our YouTube channel.



'If it wasn't for this charity I would still be on the streets. Everyone is absolutely amazing and go above and beyond to help everyone. It is a great charity and I have nothing but good words to say. Keep up the good work!'

VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHTS

Volunteers across UnityMK's Winter Night Shelter, Café, and Venue services overwhelmingly feel that their contribution makes a meaningful difference. There is a strong sense of pride in being part of a compassionate and impactful charity, with many expressing a deep connection to guests and fellow team members.



450

Volunteers



95%

of volunteers said they are likely to volunteer again*

'I have made lovely friends with the other volunteers, but my highlight has been getting to know the guests, to chat to and have a laugh with. I really care about their situations and will always wonder how they are getting on.'

'I loved being part of the cook team, cooking hearty meals for the guests. A highlight was chatting to them and understanding their stories, struggles and hopes for the future. The efforts of the WNS volunteers clearly keep those hopes alive during the winter season and will surely contribute to some of them being realised. When I left the church after doing my final shift, one of the guests ran after me to thank me, and I felt truly blessed to have been involved.'

*On a scale of 1 to 10, volunteers surveyed rated their likelihood of volunteering again at an average of 9.5 — giving a 95% satisfaction score



‘It was inspiring for both Chris and I to witness the work that you do day in day out at UnityMK which is essential for our community. More than that I was humbled by the kindness and humanity that runs through your wonderful organisation.’

Pippa Kirkbride- High Sheriff of Buckinghamshire

OUR SUPPORTERS



This work has been assisted by very welcome grants, donations and ongoing support from:

Grants, Trusts & Foundations

Albert Hunt Trust
 Amazon Charitable Foundation
 Beatrice Laing Trust
 Clothworkers Foundation
 CMK Town Council
 Garfield Weston Foundation
 Great Holm and Loughton Parish Council
 Great Linford Parish Council
 Hedley Foundation
 Milton Keynes City Council
 Milton Keynes Community Foundation
 National Lottery
 Stony Stratford Town Council
 The Grocers Charity
 Shenley Church End Parish Council

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 Green Motion
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 Mitie
 MK Lightning
 Morrisons
 Network Rail
 Opus Restructuring and Insolvency
 ProAct
 Sainsbury's
 Shoosmiths
 The Bluemarble
 The Coal Hatch

Community Organisations

All Saints Church Milton Keynes
 Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service
 Christ Church Stantonbury
 Churches Together Winslow
 Fairfields Primary School
 Hand On Heart
 Homely Spaces Limited
 Inner Wheel Club Buckingham
 Inner Wheel Club, Wolverton
 Kents Hill Park School
 MacIntyre Charity
 Milton Keynes College
 Milton Keynes Grand Union
 Rotary
 Milton Keynes Preparatory School
 Milton Keynes Soroptimists
 Milton Keynes Tabernacle
 MK Chorale
 MK Foodbank
 MK Lakeside Runners
 MK Watling Rotary Club
 Mursley Singers

New City Church MK
 New Life Church Milton Keynes
 Newport Pagnell Baptist Church
 Newport Pagnell Parochial Church Council
 Newport Pagnell Singers
 Old Stratford School
 Parochial Church Council of Aspley Guise
 Polymnia Choir
 Queensway Methodist Church
 Ravenstone Parochial Church Council
 Rehome your Electricals
 Rotary Club of Bletchley
 Rotary Club of Wolverton and Stony Stratford
 Shenley Church End Parish Council
 St Faiths Church, Newton Longville
 St George Baptist Church
 Suleman Foundation
 Watling Academy
 Wavendon & Walton Parochial Church Council
 We Make Footballers
 Willen Church
 Winners Chapel

A big thank you to you all - your support has played a key role in making our work possible.



WAYS TO GET INVOLVED



Donate

Every donation, no matter how big or small, makes a difference to the services we can offer to people who face or experience homelessness in our city.



Volunteer

Volunteer with us and help support life-changing services. With flexible roles and shifts, any time you give makes a real difference. No experience needed—just a willingness to help.



Fundraise

By fundraising for us, you're helping people in Milton Keynes move away from homelessness. Every pound raised provides vital support, shelter, and a path to a more stable future.



Corporate Partnerships

You are integral to the success of our charity, from providing HR advice and compassionate café sessions to offering employment opportunities for our guests and supporting fundraising events. Your business's time and expertise could be truly transformative.

CONTACT US



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