

Doorstep

"Opening doors for homeless families"



Annual Report 2022 and Accounts 2021-2022

Director's Report-Vicky Fox

It has been a transformative year of development and growth that we have been working to achieve for a long time.

Successful fundraising meant we were able to recruit a new full time member of staff, Ubah Egal, in March 2022 for one year. The role of Parent Support/Advocate to support adults was a need we had identified several years ago, but the funding had remained elusive. The role has achieved extremely significant benefits for parents and families and we are hopeful that we will be able to raise sufficient funds to continue this much needed and effective area of work.

Similarly, the new Youth Project service which had to be put on hold due to the pandemic was finally established. We welcomed Kaamila Mohamed onto the team to lead this project. Young people from 12 years upwards now have the opportunity to meet with their peers and engage in activities of their choice. These have included cooking for each other, sharing recipes and food from their different countries and cultures. They have developed a social action video highlighting the need for WiFi to be provided in temporary accommodation hostels. During the summer holidays they were able to try new things such as kayaking and go karting which they very much enjoyed.

We also welcomed Dilly Azam who has been working to give additional support in our creches and holiday programmes

We are currently in the process of reviewing the five year strategic business plan we created in 2018. Looking back at the goals we set then it is gratifying to see that so many have been achieved. Together with our stakeholders we are developing a new plan for 2023 to 2028 which will include a plan for my succession within that period. In 2023 it will be 33 years since I joined Doorstep and the time is approaching for me to hand over the reins. We will be looking at staffing and the roles required to ensure Doorstep has a strong infrastructure and continues to flourish for all the future years that the support we provide is needed.

Fundraising is always a high priority and will remain so. Having achieved developments this year we need to raise sufficient funds to be able to sustain them, along with our core services, as well as to support the goals we set for the next five years. It won't be easy given the current economic market and cost of living crisis but the very vulnerable people we work to support are relying on us to succeed.

My thanks go to the members of Doorstep's board of trustees for their commitment to Doorstep and ensuring good governance. I'd like to give a special thanks to Alpona Banerji who has been chair since 2018 and has led the board through its difficult times and achievements. Alpona will be stepping down as chair but we are thankful she will be remaining as a trustee.

Sincere thanks also to our patron Victoria Coren Mitchell for her continued interest and support.

Last but by no means least thanks to my colleagues both new and old for all their hard work.

We look forward to the future with optimism and determination.

Our services

Our services have been developed over the years in direct response to the needs that families have expressed:

- ★ Opportunities for children and young people to play, learn and develop at our after school club, crèches, Youth Project and drop-ins.
- ★ Joint activities with the partner organisations.
- ★ Regular creative & educational activities for adults.
- ★ Information, support and guidance for parents.
- ★ A programme of special activities and outings during the summer and school holidays.
- ★ A weekly 'bazaar' giving access to free essential goods donated by the wider community.
- ★ Free daily access to laundry facilities.
- ★ Family food packages, healthy snacks and meals

216 people accessed Doorstep's services from January to December 2022, which was an increase of 24% on the previous year. During this period 32 new families with 68 children registered with Doorstep and 21 families with 41 children moved away- 4 to permanent social housing and 17 to private rented. We supported a total of 66 families, 75 adults and 130 children and young people. Additional needs among our children and young people include severe allergies, ADHD, severe anxiety, Epidermolysis Bullosa. Autism Spectrum, Verbal development delay, SALT, PKU, Mobility Disorder, Epilepsy & Tourettes.

Highlights of the Year

We were successful in raising sufficient funds to restart provision of a monthly parcel of food basics for every family.



Doorstep Parent Support and Advocacy Service

In March Ubah Egal joined the team as Parent Support/Advocate and after an initial period of introduction and an assessment of needs she provided support and activities.

From March 2022-October 2022, Doorstep's ParentSupport/Advocate saw 45 individual families for support as one-to-one visitors to the new service.

This includes:

20 families referred for first round Camden Cost of living Grants generating £3000 grant awards direct to families. A further 39 Families were supported for the Oct/Nov Cost of living grants. The estimated total payment to the families is in the 20k region.

Doorstep has up to 70% of families with English as a second language. The demographic includes, Syrian, Afghan, Somali, Bangladesh, Ukrainian, Ethiopian, Eritrean, Sudanese, Moroccan, Guinea Bissau and many more international countries of origin.

Issues covered in the parent support weekly drop-ins which take place 4 x per week include:

Rent Arrears enquiries: 17
HB stopping or new claims: 6
Universal credit sanctions: 10
Universal credit app/website enquires to update: 28
Universal credit stopped: 3
Maternity Grant application: 2
Healthy start applications: 4
GP and health enquiries: 9
Fuel and energy provider: 5
Repairs enquiries in hostel: 8
School application: 5 (secondary)
School Applications: 3 (primary)-Deadline new year.
Reading official letters and explaining the contents: 30
Housing support for homelessness assessments: 33
School exclusion/move: 1
Safeguarding report: 1
Camden Safety Net referral: 1
Early Help referral: 3
Floating support referral: 2
Camden Law Centre referral: 2
Camden Debt Specialist referral for serious fuel debt: 4
Camden Debt Specialist referral for debt consolidation: 2
Camden Housing allocation Zone banding challenge: 1
Solicitor referral for discharge of duty case: 1
Immigration enquiries: 3
Child Protection case referral: 2

Referral for MP support for housing points removed or under threat: 5
Referral to MP for housing support general and enquiries: 10
Miscellaneous enquiries 59
Total enquiries: 258

Camden Citizens Advice: 5 signposts, two for debt advice and 3 for general help.

Early Help: 3 referrals, 1 new case PTSD war trauma and family impact, 1 School exclusion risk of child grooming for county lines, 1 referral for new refugee family with no access to public funds.

Law Centre: 1 referral for discharge of housing duty unlawfully. Also, the case referred to a solicitor firm for legal aid representation. Case won by private firm.

MP has taken several cases to further enquire at a constituent level for residents which has yielded significant change in all the cases referred. 15 cases with 6 pending currently.
What kind of issues have been referred?

The MP casework team have taken 1 case trying to move a family from the Private rental scheme given that it was one bedroom too small. Mother had SEND child and did not want to move again. MP helped ensure this did not happen.

1 case where the family were in an environmental health team condemned property due to damp and mould, family emergency moved back to Camden, MP helped to argue this family suffered enough and they were housed no longer out of borough but in Camden.

Forum

We set up a Parent forum in May, they meet once a month to discuss topics important to them, share their views about Doorstep services and areas of improvement. We have on average 6-10 participants monthly.

Parents raised concerns about the lack of free internet access in the hostel, they raised concern that housing officers never see them face to face and multiple officers call them, confusing them by not clarifying what role each officer does. Parents felt they needed to know more about housing law and their rights.

Policy makers and directors have visited the service and heard parents want to see Housing Officers in person.

Classes and workshops

A 10-week Digital literacy class with 10 parents.

In partnership with Working Men's College 3 basket making classes attended by 16 parents. Coffee morning weekly with computer access and bidding for council housing support. This session has an average attendee group of 11 adults.

Partnership working

To address some of the needs identified in the Forum and engagement work, Doorstep have developed new Partnerships to support the needs of our parents. We now partner with:

Working Men's College to programme a range of classes term time for adults onsite. Future planned classes include ESOL, Numeracy, Parent's classes to understand their children's homework and be better able to support their kids. Healthy cooking classes and more craft and art classes for January 2023.

Camden ESOL Advice Service, As ESOL is a large area of work and the levels of competency differ Camden's EAS team agreed to fast track access and place Doorstep families on to appropriate courses through their network. 16 adults were tested, all were placed into ESOL provisions across the borough over the summer. 2 were given online learning classes.

Camden Early Help Team Early help team met with us to discuss better ways to get our families accessing early help at the right time. We developed a partnership where Early Help officers will visit our adult drop-in sessions to meet families and explain what they do. Doorstep will refer to them and they also referred families to us. We have seen the benefits of Early help intervention and believe this to be a very important service to signpost to.

Camden Law Centre Doorstep families on occasion have legal issues we are not trained to manage, we are partnering with the Law Centre to signpost cases which require expert knowledge in Housing, family, and Employment Law. Camden Law centre officers have also supported our Parent Advocate to help check pre legal letters so Doorstep can assist with support from the experts when appropriate. This can be to ensure any requests sent on behalf of families have been signed off by an expert, this partnership allows us to make sure families are up to date on current rights and legal knowledge.

Citizens Advice This partnership was developed to support families with complex advice needs, such as significant debt, CAB have a debt specialist only for the locality we are based in, this worker has taken several referrals direct from us and have helped them manage fuel bills, rent arrears, credit, and loan debt.

Camden Carers, Doorstep have several parent carers and we have referred many to join this project to access specialist support for carers. Camden Carers also run training and one-off sessions for carers, and we plan to host a session in early 2023.

Advice Network Meetings run by Camden Council which we attend has allowed Doorstep to meet and partner with:

Mary Ward Centre, Komos Centre, Age UK as well as other community providers we can refer families to for extra help. We have attended Camden Cost of living crisis meetings and workshops.

Focus Groups

In October 2022 sixteen parents participated in focus groups to contribute to Doorstep's 5-year Strategic Planning, sharing ideas and experiences which will help to shape the direction of our work over the next 5 years.

Strategic work

Doorstep has made inroads into strengthening our strategic impact in Camden by meeting senior Housing department officers to feed in the experiences adults are having engaging and working with Camden departments.

The development of this work has seen an increase in more partnership working with frontline staff to enable better experience for families using the housing and homelessness services in the borough. This work is ongoing and continues to develop in partnership with Camden council.



Youth Project

After some initial setbacks with launching the Youth Project Kaamila Mohamed joined the team in April and worked with our young people on developing this new service. The group meets two evenings per week and the activities have been varied. Young people are encouraged to identify activities they would like to do. They appreciate having their own space to spend time with their peers away from siblings and the confines of cramped rooms.



Summer Programme

Our Summer Programme ran for five weeks during the holidays. We were very lucky to receive a grant which enabled us to visit, pay for activities and to go on a lot more outings than we can normally afford. Thirty six families, seventy children and young people and 50 adults participated. We were blessed with lovely weather throughout and everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

Outings & Activities

Under 5 years visited playgrounds at Broadhurst Gdns, Fairfax Rd, Swiss Cottage, Regents Park and JW3 Beach. They had onsite activities including Arts, Crafts & Games. They also joined the weekly family day trip.

5-11 years old visited Paddington Recreation Park, Diana Memorial Park, Inflatation, Kidzania & Flip Out. Onsite they did Arts, Crafts, Cooking, Games & Sports. They also joined the weekly family day trip.

12 years and over visited Regents Park and went to the Cinema, Bowling, Thames River Boat, London Eye, Go Ape, London Aquarium, DNA Virtual Reality, Escape Room, Go Ape, Kayaking, Lazer Tag & Go Karting. Onsite they did art, Crafts, Games, Sports & Cooking. They also joined the weekly family day trip.

Day Trips for the whole family were once per week and we visited Southend, Eastbourne, Clacton, Margate and London Zoo.



Celebrations

We held several parties throughout the year. In July MP Tulip Siddiq joined us to celebrate EID with tasty dishes cooked by service users, music, henna art and gifts for the children.

In September we welcomed some of our funders, our patron Victoria Coren Mitchell, our trustees and our families to share delicious food for everyone and face painting for the children to celebrate the development of new services.

At Christmas we held three parties for the different age groups. One for parents and under fives with a hot meal cooked in house and games for the children. Another for the kids aged 5-11 years with face painting, games, snacks, pizza and treats. Finally, the youth group chose to go out for a meal and went ice skating. Thanks to the generosity of various schools, businesses, a local church and kind individuals every child and young person received two gifts. Successful fundraising meant we were able to provide every family with a supermarket gift card.

Thanks to volunteer bakers at Free Cakes for Kids Camden every child received a customised cake and a gift on their birthday.



Case Study 1- Creche

Child E was 2.5 years old when she started using Doorstep's creche. She was used to staying with relatives while Mum went to college so settled quickly into the setting but wouldn't speak English or her home language. Her only method of communication was to smile at adults when they spoke to her. Unable to ascertain how much E understood, creche staff decided to work with her 1-to-1, encouraging her to explore the setting and choose different resources to use. E was able to play alongside peers for 2-3 minutes with support but preferred being with an adult, and needed support to share toys and take turns with activities. E and her Mum were encouraged to attend as regularly as possible to ensure E would benefit from professional support for social and language development. As time passed E started to mimic adults and repeat words she heard, starting with 'Bye' and waving as she left the setting, and now using the names of other children, and saying short 2-3 word sentences in English or her home language.

Case Study 2- After School Club

Child D experienced a lot of change as she started Reception and started attending Doorstep's After-School club with her sibling. D found so many changes, in addition to the problems which had led to her family living in the hostel was emotionally challenging. She would often cry when Mum tried to leave the after-school club without her. Adults would try to distract her by encouraging her to play with girls her age, or with her older sister which worked occasionally but would result in D becoming upset again later when children decided they wanted to play elsewhere or with other resources and she didn't, or if the play became too loud or rough. With support from teenage volunteers from the Youth Project, as well as time spent 1-to-1 with staff members immediately after her Mum has left, D has now managed to attend the whole summer programme with her peers. At after-school club sessions she can become upset when tired from school but is easily distracted with arts and craft, cooking or learning activity; she happily plays in a small group of similarly aged girls resources indoors or bouncing on the trampoline calling out to friends. Her improved self-confidence has meant she can now join-in all of the activities and often chats with teen volunteers about school and her family.

Case Study 3- Youth Project

M is 16, and had lived in the hostel for 4 months, but while her younger sibling rushed to After-school club there was nothing for her age group, until the Youth Project was launched. M didn't know any-one her age at the hostel, only her much younger neighbours, who would often interrupt her studies to play with her sibling. Within the first few weeks of attending Youth Project, M had made friends with 3 girls in her year group. Although they were all at different schools, living in the same situation while trying to study for GCSEs gave them common ground. They were able to find space to chat and relax, relate to each other and empathise with the issues each was facing with siblings destroying coursework and problems getting to school on time after being moved further away. M now attends every session, although she often worries

about making time for the revision and homework she gets set, and has led cookery sessions as well as supporting the young teens to complete art and cooking activities successfully.

Case Study 4-Parent Support

S is a mother in her 30's who came to live in the hostel as a result of DV. She reported that the case is ongoing, and the father was declined access to the children by the family court and a non-molestation order was taken out against him. The children have witnessed the violence towards their mother and have experienced some level of it themselves. The father recently applied to the court, which the mother reports has been distressing for her children.

S has a daughter aged 16, who is a year 11 student at a local school. S came to the UK on a visa with the childrens' father and now has legal status. She lived in his council house but once the marriage hit difficulty, he evicted her and their children. She is currently on benefits, unable to move from the hostel due to the benefit cap. The family is supported by Doorstep and we are supporting S to seek skills development. S hopes she can gain sustainable employment and not have to remain in hostel rooms which is very difficult for children studying GCSEs. Doorstep has provided a laptop for home learning.

Case study 5 - Parent Support

L is a single mother who has been sharing one hostel room with her two sons aged 23 and 15. Her 23 year old son has now moved out. L lost her job as a beautician during lockdown which caused her to get into debt. L told us that the lockdown also affected the self confidence and mental health of both herself and her aged 15-year-old son. His mental health was affected by being stuck in one room with his family. He also struggled to adapt to online schooling and managing his studies and only had access to a defective device.

The family had lived in a comfortable private rental for 13 years, where her sons each had their own room, but they became homeless when the landlord sold the property. The family were moved into a hostel where they remained for two years. That hostel then closed down and they were moved to another hostel where they are currently living. L told us she believes that moving into a small hostel room was the beginning of her son's mental health troubles. Her son's behaviour became more challenging when he could no longer go to school or see friends and had to spend most of the time in the one room. L said her son is on the waiting list to be seen by CAMHS because he is struggling to catch up at school and may fail GCSEs. Her son refused to see the Tavistock link worker at the school so there has been a delay in him getting help for his mental health. Doorstep provided a new laptop so he can do his coursework and online access to therapy is planned; he has also been invited to the Youth Project.

What Service Users say.....

The parent/ service user focus groups, which were held as part of our review and strategic planning for the next five years, were conducted by an independent facilitator. The feedback was hugely positive. When asked -What do you like about Doorstep?- it was everything and all our services were listed. When asked -What can Doorstep do better and in the future-it was more staff, enhancement of existing services and ideas for new services to be developed. They also identified issues they wanted Doorstep to highlight with policy and decision makers to bring about change.

Some comments from participants:

"Cannot fault them. They provide lots of support for adults and children. They will deal with any question and any source of confusion".

"The staff are always very helpful, they always have time for you, emotional and physical, always open, "Doorstep is "a family", "like an extended family". "People do not feel isolated".

"Service activities for children and young people are child centred".

"I was struggling when I came to Doorstep, and they cared for me as a person".

"When I see the shopping, I am very happy". "It helps with meeting the stress of the cost of living".



The Bigger Picture

Looking at the bigger picture the following is taken from various blogs produced by Shelter, which reflect the issues and difficulties we see families experiencing.

This is not a home: in temporary accommodation you have to put on a brave face

21 December 2022 by Fiona McLeod -Involvement Officer at Shelter



One in every 100 children in England is homeless and living in temporary accommodation provided by the local council. To put that in perspective, that's over 120,000 kids spending the Christmas holidays in temporary accommodation.

I know what this feels like. I know only too well the unbearable pressure that living in temporary accommodation can put on children's health, education and wellbeing. Because I lived it as a mum, with my then teenage son, for five long, hard years. And I see it every day in my work with other families still going through it.

That's why, along with other experts by experience – a number of them still living in temporary accommodation – I've been steering a landmark piece of Shelter research. This research looks into the impact of temporary accommodation on families like ours. It's been funded by Trust for London and The Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

We're frustrated that so few people know what this form of hidden homelessness is like. Other parents often have no idea what we're going through, even when our children are in the same nursery or class at school.

Our research was made possible because more than 800 families living in temporary accommodation throughout England, took time out of their often hellish days to tell us about their experiences. These families included 1,600 children. They wanted their voices to be heard.

Here are some of the worst problems we want to tell you about:

Sharing beds

Our survey found that more than a third (35%) of parents in temporary accommodation say their children don't have a bed of their own, so have to share a bed with another family member.

This can affect children differently depending on their age. Young children might not mind sharing a bed but find it difficult to get to sleep in hostel-style accommodation, with noise from other residents, and are easily disturbed. This leaves them tired and irritable. Some parents find distressed younger children wet the bed – which isn't easy to deal with without your own washing machine! On the other hand, teenagers can be affected by the lack of privacy, space and their own bed: you're not allowed to have your own furniture. And what teenage boy wants their friends to know they share the same room with their mum, let alone the same bed?

Education

Our survey found almost half (45%) of school-age children have arrived at school tired, late or hungry as a result of living in temporary accommodation.

Mornings can be very difficult. Children wake tired from disturbed sleep. Hotel rooms rarely have facilities to store or cook food – not even a fridge to keep milk for cereal. And in hostels with shared bathrooms and kitchens, there are big problems when as many as ten families are all trying to get their children showered and given breakfast.

Then there's the commute to school. Over a quarter of temporary accommodation is in another area. So families often have to set off for school very early in the morning, waiting in the dark and rain for a series of buses to get to school on time. The long commute home means children miss after-school clubs or intervention lessons.

Finally, the lack of internet in lots of temporary accommodation can really affect homework and study. When my teenage son told a teacher he had no wifi at home, they replied that everyone had wifi at home – they had no idea.

Mental health

It's upsetting, but not surprising. Our survey found one in four parents (26%) report their child or children being often unhappy or depressed as a result of living in temporary accommodation.

I knew of parents who worried about how their children would cope if they had to stay in the hostel environment much longer. Children are very conscious that they lack the most basic things that class-mates take for granted: a secure home, their own bedroom, space to play and study, being able to have friends over, internet, a private toilet, a kitchen they can wander into to raid the biscuit tin, a familiar neighbourhood where they feel safe.

Not knowing how long they'll have to stay in the accommodation or where they'll end up, and frequent short-notice moves to different temporary accommodation, are extremely unsettling and lead to anxiety.

Myself and my son went into the hostel with some existing mental health issues. Imagine having previously fled domestic violence, only to hear reminders of it through the thin adjoining walls of a hostel room. There were routine checks on your rooms by hostel staff, whether you were in or not, for health and safety reasons.

Social isolation

Our survey found more than one in four parents (28%) say their children are finding it hard to make or keep friends as a result of living in temporary accommodation.

School-age children, especially teenagers, can feel too ashamed to tell anyone their family is homeless and living in temporary accommodation. Some parents tell us their children pretend to their friends that they still live in their former home because of the stigma they feel.

It can also be difficult to hang out with friends because the temporary accommodation is so far away from school. Or because they're unable to have friends over due to the lack of space, privacy or strict 'no-visitor' rules. What teenager wants to invite a friend to a room in a hostel where the whole family is crammed in and they can't chat in private?

This can't carry on

I felt grateful for our hostel room because (unlike some) it didn't have infestations or damp. I felt grateful for the next accommodation, in a converted office, because it was in a neighbouring council area, so still near my support network. But, despite all this gratitude, my son continued to suffer.

He was 12 when we first became homeless. He spent the remainder of his secondary school life without internet at home, without a place to invite his friends back, without space for a desk and homework area and (a lot of the time) without a room of his own.

He didn't get the school grades he was capable of. We can't get those years back. But we can stop it happening to other families.

What can you do to help

Along with other families living in temporary accommodation, I joined a Temporary Accommodation Action Group to fight for better standards, facilities and a better service from our accommodation provider.

I'm now an Involvement Officer, supporting other families to get their voices heard.

But families shouldn't be homeless in the first place – or left stuck in damaging temporary accommodation for months and years at a time. They need a secure home.

Without urgent government action, thousands more families like mine will become homeless this winter as the lack of social housing, frozen local housing allowance and the cost of living crisis all take their toll.

Not-so-temporary accommodation

19 December 2022 by Jenny Pennington- Senior Researcher at Shelter



The housing emergency and subsequent cost of living crisis are pushing thousands of households into homelessness.

New statistics show that over 150,000 households became homeless across just the first six months of 2022. But what happens to the increasing numbers of people pushed onto the homelessness safety net?

In England, councils have a duty to support most families experiencing homelessness to find a suitable, settled home. Until a suitable home can be offered, they provide 'temporary' accommodation.

However, this safety net is failing to function – suitable settled accommodation (either a social or private tenancy of at least 12 months) is proving hard to find. So, temporary accommodation (TA) is not proving to be temporary at all.

- **Two-thirds of families living in TA have been there for more than 12 months. In London, this rises to more than four-fifths**

- Some families have been living in temporary accommodation for more than 10 years

- Even emergency accommodation (like homeless B&Bs), is increasingly being used to accommodate people long term. 1 in 4 families in B&Bs, reception centres and hostels (under homelessness legislation) have been there for more than a year. Half of London families in this type of accommodation have been there for more than a year

- Partly due to these long stays, **the number of households living in temporary accommodation has almost doubled in just ten years. The acute shortage of affordable housing options means there's little prospect of a route out**

In fact, in the absence of safe, secure social homes, we are seeing the steady growth of a new kind of government-provided housing. But one without tenancy rights, specific standards, or effective oversight. Temporary accommodation was never designed to be a place where people build lives and children thrive. Yet it is now being relied on to provide that function for hundreds of thousands of people.

So what's the impact of forcing hundreds of thousands of people to live like this?

Over the last 6 months, we've been exploring the impact of this breakdown of our housing system on the people forced to experience it.

This is something we have gathered insight on for years, and others have too. And this research revealed shocking stories and compelling evidence that change is needed. But there hasn't been any broadly representative, quantitative research on temporary accommodation carried out since our last research in 2004 – a time when the housing emergency was nowhere near as bad as it is today. Without up-to-date data, the extent of issues, and their impacts, can be ignored.

So, following a period of qualitative research and consultation, led by experts by experience, (as we reported back in February), we have set out to fill that data gap by conducting the largest-ever survey of households living in temporary accommodation.

Filling the data gap

Over the spring, led by a steering group of people with lived experience of homelessness, we drafted the survey questions.

We partnered with local authorities across England to pilot, and then launch the full survey in June. Participants were contacted by post and email and given the option to complete the fifteen-minute survey online or over the telephone. By the time we closed it in August, we'd received 1,112 full responses. People stuck in temporary accommodation are clearly very keen to have their voices heard.

We've spent the last few months cleaning and verifying this data, crunching the numbers, and working closely with our steering group to interpret the results.

We now have a trove of results that give fresh new insight into what temporary accommodation is like, how it affects day-to-day life and the impacts of being forced to build a life on temporary foundations.

Over the next couple of months, we'll start to share the results here, and start a conversation about how to ensure we have a housing system, and homelessness safety net, that allows families to thrive, rather than simply survive.

Levelling Up with social housing: stop temporary accommodation becoming permanent

5 January 2023 by Andrew Soar-Campaigner at Shelter

Previously we covered how the word 'affordable' in housing has started to lose all meaning. Our research team has noted, the word 'temporary' is going in the same direction.

The recent National Housing Survey has found that of the 120,000 children growing up in temporary accommodation, 26,641 children are under five. There are 59,500 households in temporary accommodation – a staggering 56.8% rise from the 37,940 in 2010. And two thirds of families living in temporary accommodation have been there for more than 12 months. In London, this rises to more than four fifths.

Why is temporary becoming more permanent? There's nowhere else for people to go.

Not replacing and increasing our social housing stock is increasing the housing benefit bill and leaving thousands in temporary accommodation. Temporary accommodation is becoming the new social housing. It's where you end up if you can't afford the market and the state accommodates you because there is no social housing available.

A [recent report](#) by the Public Accounts Committee stated: 'We are concerned that the number of homes being built for social rent is not enough to meet demand. There is huge demand for social rent homes which is the only real, affordable option for many people.'

They're not wrong. Last week the social housing waiting list was updated – it's now up to 1.2million people.

And yet, every year we lose thousands more social homes than we build. So, how do we reverse this trend?

Levelling Up with Social Housing:

The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill enters the House of Lords next month. This is a big opportunity for the government to prioritise social housing over other tenures; making sure more of the most affordable types of housing are built.

To do that, we need to help councils, make developers build their fair share, and make social housing the number one priority when new 'affordable' homes are built. Here's what we're calling for:

Making developers build their fair share of social housing:

Currently, social housing is mostly delivered by private developers who are made to build social homes as part of the agreement when they get permission to build a new development. This is a Section 106 agreement. The Levelling Up Bill wants to scrap this method, and proposes a new Infrastructure Levy. We believe this new levy must focus on delivering more social homes than the current system. However, because of the way the levy may work, it could mean there's a

loophole so social homes aren't built as part of every development. **Our amendment would close that loophole.**

Building social, not 'affordable' housing:

Not all types of 'affordable' housing is affordable to those on lower wages. We believe this new Infrastructure Levy is an opportunity to make it clear that the only type of housing that is truly affordable is social housing. **Our amendment would specify that social housing should be built rather than just 'affordable' housing.**

Helping Councils build more social housing:

We need to make land cheaper so councils can build social homes. Hope Value is the bizarre old rule which makes social housing really difficult for councils to build because it inflates the cost of land.

This change would also make brownfield, urban land more likely to be used to build the homes communities need. **Our amendment would scrap hope value for projects that build social housing.**

These changes to the Bill would prioritise social housing over other tenures, make sure more is built by developers, and help councils build more.

We understand that these changes seem quite technical, but we want to remind you of the impact a social home can have on a family.



Treasurer's Report

The financial statements for Doorstep (or 'the charity') cover the financial year ending 31 March 2022.

The fiscal year 2022 ended in a secure position, with the reserve carried forward being sufficient to support the running of the charity for a minimum of six months. The management committee and director recognise the need for, and remain committed to, pursuing multi-year funding both to minimise the risk of disruption to the charity's services, for example in the event of a downturn in one or more areas of external funding

Careful financial and operating records have been kept throughout the financial year ending on 31 March 2022. The accounts for the fiscal year ending 31 March 2022 have been examined by an independent accountancy firm. Detailed records of financial documents are available and may be requested from Doorstep Homeless Families Project, 13A Broadhurst Gardens, London NW6 3QX.

The Management Committee members are satisfied that Doorstep is entitled to exemption from the provisions of the Companies Act 2006 (the Act) relating to the audit of the financial statements for the year in accordance with section 477, and that no member or members have requested an audit pursuant to section 476 of the Act.

The Management Committee members acknowledge their responsibilities for:

- 1- Ensuring that the charity keeps adequate accounting records which comply with section 386 of the Act, and
- 2- Preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of the charity as at the end of the financial year 2022 and of its profit or loss for the aforementioned financial year in accordance with the requirements of section 393, and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Act relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the charity.

These financial statements were approved by the members of the committee on 25/10/22 and were signed on their behalf by the chair, Alpona Banerji.

Alexa Brummer
Treasurer

DOORSTEP
COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
(INCORPORATING THE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
<u>Income From</u>					
Donations and grants	3	68,210	87,338	155,548	212,636
Total Income		68,210	87,338	155,548	212,636
<u>Expenditure on:</u>					
Fundraising	4	4,730	-	4,730	4,752
Charitable activities	4	76,468	55,581	132,049	129,724
Total expenditure		81,198	55,581	136,779	134,476
Net income / (expenditure) for the year	5	(12,988)	31,757	18,769	78,160
Funds brought forward		118,542	16,748	135,290	57,130
Total funds carried forward		105,554	48,505	154,059	135,290

All of the above results are derived from continuing activities.
There were no other recognised gains or losses other than those stated above.
The attached notes form part of these financial statements.

DOORSTEP
COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE
BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31 MARCH 2022

	Note	2022 £	2021 £
Fixed assets			
Tangible Assets	7	-	-
Current assets			
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>229,282</u>	<u>177,232</u>
		229,282	177,232
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	8	<u>(75,223)</u>	<u>(41,942)</u>
Net current assets		<u>154,059</u>	<u>135,290</u>
Net assets		<u><u>154,059</u></u>	<u><u>135,290</u></u>
Funds			
Restricted Funds	9	48,505	16,748
General funds	9	<u>105,554</u>	<u>118,542</u>
Total charity funds		<u><u>154,059</u></u>	<u><u>135,290</u></u>

For the year ended 31 March 2022 the charitable company was entitled to exemption under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

No members have required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 with respect to accounting records and preparation of accounts.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.

Approved by the trustees on
and signed on its behalf by:

Alpona Banerji (Chair)

Company Registration No. 02476922

Chair's report

Doorstep continues to be a strong and reliable partner for vulnerable families in the local community, a task that it has been undertaking for more than three decades. In that regard, I can proudly report that Doorstep had a particularly successful year as it ramped up capacity in terms of staff, services and impact on users.

First mentioned as a strategic goal in the business strategy plan of 2018-2023, Doorstep finally hired a full time member of staff, to focus on supporting parents, who has been particularly effective in engaging with the families by helping to directly support individual challenges faced by families. This has already achieved significant benefits such as stronger engagement with Doorstep activities and services from families. Doorstep also launched a new service called the Youth Project, which focuses on young people from 12 years upwards. Under supervision, the young people now have the ability to interact with others their own age and engage in activities that appeal to their age group. I got a chance to talk to some of the young people using this service and I was struck by how particularly engaged this demographic was with Doorstep and their enthusiasm for Doorstep's services spoke volumes as it reflected their growing confidence, their ability to make friends and enjoy life as other young people do.

Essential food parcels distribution to the families continued on a monthly basis as the cost of living crisis intensified. The weekly childcare services, laundry services and weekly bazaar were working full speed ahead. The summer programme was full and impossibly more comprehensive than I have ever seen it: with multiple trips outside London for children and families, which were enormously appreciated as they allowed the families a respite from their cramped living spaces. These trips allow the hostel residents and particularly the children to have some carefree days over the summer holidays which are so important for mental and physical health. The year ended with multiple face to face children's holiday parties and each child receiving at least 2 gifts!

As I step down as Chairperson for Doorstep, I would like to thank and acknowledge the commitment and critical involvement of Director Vicky Fox, and her small and efficient team that makes Doorstep what it is. Vicky and her team continue to adapt to the new realities of the cost of living crisis and supporting families that are particularly vulnerable to this new economic reality. I would also like to thank the Management Committee, a group of volunteers who readily give their time to Doorstep by meeting every 6 to 8 weeks, with several ad hoc meetings over the year to further the work of sub-committees. I would like to thank them for all their counsel and support over the past five years.

Additionally, the Management Committee and I, thank Doorstep's Patron, Victoria Coren Mitchel for all her support and generosity.

Finally, thank you to all our supporters: individuals, trusts, charities, companies and schools that help us in a plethora of ways, and that allows us to continue to positively impact our community year after year.

Alpona Banerji

We give our most sincere and grateful thanks to the following organisations for their support of Doorstep and our families:

Ahmadiya Ladies Muslim Community Group
AKO Foundation
Barnett & Sylvia Shine Charitable Foundation
BBC Children in Need
Benevity
Bloom Foundation
Boston Consulting Group
Camden Council
Camden Giving
Camden Open Air Gallery
Cellnex
Crucible Foundation
Devonshire Hill School
Elliott Simmons Charitable Trust
Fitzdale Trust
Free Cakes for Kids Camden
Hampstead Wells & Campden Trust
Ickenham Masonic Lodge
JA Kemp LLP
John Chilton School

Limi London
London Community Foundation
McLaren Group
Meta
Moonbug
Properly Properties
Reel Fund
Sarum Hall School
South Hampstead Junior School
St Christina's School
St Mary's Church
StreetSmart
The American School in London
The Charles Lewis Foundation
The Kajatawa Foundation
University College School
Voluntary Action Camden
Waitrose & Partners
Warner Brothers
XTX Markets

Also, to the very many kind and generous individuals who donated money, food, toys, clothes, books, and their time.

The Management Committee

Alpona Banerji - Chair

Jo Cunningham - Secretary

Alexa Brummer- Treasurer

Celia Carr - Appointed 25/10/21

Kate Gaertner- Resigned 25/10/21

Phoebe Stamford-Moroz - Vice Chair

Sara Katchi

Lesley Adams

Tsedey Yilala-Appointed 26/09/22

Layle Asmat- Resigned 17/01/22

The Staff Team

Vicky Fox - Director

Ubah Egal - Parent Support/Advocate

Sarah Lough & Khadra Mohamed - Children's Workers (part time)

Belkize Banjica - Housekeeping & sessional play support (part time)

Kaamila Mohamed- Youth Lead (part time)

Dilufer Azam - Play Support (part time)

Volunteers

ASL teachers & Students

Aysha Ahmed

McLaren Team

Patron

Victoria Coren-Mitchell

Not forgetting the hundreds of other individuals who took part in occasional projects- we give our sincere thanks to each and every one!



Doorstep Homeless Families Project
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London NW6 3QX

Tel: 0207 372 0413

Email: hello@doorsteplondon.com Website: www.doorsteplondon.com

www.facebook.com/DoorstepLondon

https://twitter.com/doorstep_london

www.instagram.com/doorstep_london

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