



Action learning in partnership during a year like no other

Foreword

4

**Our year
in review**

6

**Three year
strategy**

8

**Learning
together**

Recently
evaluated
projects

10

**Building
together**

Projects
undergoing
replication

16

**Thinking
together**

Completed research
and feasibility
studies

22

**Innovating
together**

New research
and feasibility
studies

32

**Financial
reports
2020/21**

34

Governance

35

Thanks

36



Photo courtesy of Solace

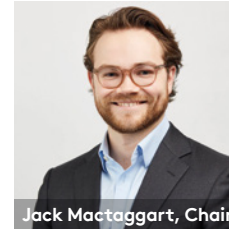
Foreword

For fifteen years, Commonweal has benefited from a business model established by our founders – giving us a legacy of stability which we do not take for granted.

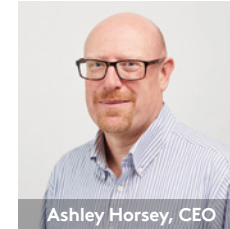
This year, it meant that we were fortunate to be insulated from some of the immediate impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic: as an independently funded charity, confident in the ongoing support of our principle benefactor and with a stable rental income stream.

As Chair and Chief Executive, we absolutely recognise the beneficial position this gave us in a worrying and uncertain world. Our stability gave us the opportunity to adapt how we work; to continue our activities; provide confidence to those we work with, and indeed to extend our support to project partners.

The impact of the pandemic across the housing sector as a whole meant that some of our project partners had many more challenges to face in 2020. Some lost significant public fundraising, as donations understandably were re-directed to medical and NHS charities. This meant that those already facing uphill battles, raising funds for more marginalised and less attractive groups, had an even greater mountain to climb.



Jack MacTaggart, Chair



Ashley Horsey, CEO

Our Trustees were clear in their wish to provide financial support to our partners, so that they could have the space to focus on doing what they do so well: helping to support and house some of the most marginalised and overlooked members of our society.

Like everyone else, the one impact of the pandemic we could not be insulated from was the need for home working, virtual communication and video meetings. The staff team and Trustees handled the situation with typical good spirit and diligence. It is important to recognise and thank the flexibility and cooperation everyone showed, ensuring that disruption was minimal, and that Commonweal could continue to be as trusted and reliable a partner as we have come to be known.

We are delighted that our evaluation and learning from our pilot projects was able to continue. It was particularly pleasing to see the important report 'Closed Doors', from our 2019 Call for New Ideas awardees Hibiscus Initiatives, published in December. This highlighted the inadequate support and accommodation which is too often the only option for female victims of trafficking unable to access safe

houses. A marginal issue in overall public consciousness perhaps, but a systemic injustice that has significant adverse impacts for those caught in a system that does not just fail them, but actively drags them down further. We are determined to continue focusing the Commonweal lens on the issue, and to use our voice to try and make a difference.

The publication of the Rhea project's final evaluation report was another milestone, recording the achievements and learning from this fantastic partnership between Solace Women's Aid and Southwark council, using family housing supplied by Commonweal. Rhea offers housing and support to women fleeing domestic violence who are unable to access traditional refuge accommodation. There is much more on these and other project and research highlights covered in detail in this annual review.

The pandemic also challenged us to find different solutions for achieving 'impact'. In our case, this was through finding new ways of sharing the learning captured from our pilot projects and research. Whether via Commonweal's first webinar promoting the findings of the Move On Up evaluation supporting young adult carers, or through the fantastic podcast series Locked Out, we are encouraged by how our whole team rose to that challenge. The Locked Out podcasts accompanied an anthology of essays we published this year, which saw nine leading experts reinforce the need for new housing solutions, to help address a wide range of different manifestations of social injustice. Full credit for the idea and delivery of both projects goes to Connie Muttock and Megan Fereday.

As an organisation, one of our key aims is to use the learning, lessons and recommendations from the work we support to challenge the status quo, and to help deliver positive change for our project beneficiaries – and society as a whole. Commonweal Housing is a growing voice, and increasingly recognised partner, but we want to achieve more than this: not for ourselves, but for those facing the systemic social injustices which our support helps to highlight, and that the pilot projects we enable help to find solutions for.

The last year may now be history, but we want to learn what we can from it. What did Commonweal do well and, just as importantly, what could we have done better?

It is through being critically self-reflective, always challenging ourselves to do more, that we can move closer to our ambition of being the 'go to' organisation for innovative and deliverable housing-based solutions to social injustice. Step by step, we are getting there.

To all members of the brilliant staff team and board, including our two new Trustees Amarjit Bains and Sheldon Shillingford – thank you. Your collective insight and passion never cease to inspire us.



Our year in review



May
2020



June
2020



Final evaluation of the Move On Up project published



Jack Mactaggart appointed Chair of Commonweal Board

July
2020



August
2020



October
2020



Jane Slowey Memorial Celebration 2020
New Jane Slowey recipients announced



November
2020



Social Housing White Paper meets recommendations of Exempt Accommodation report

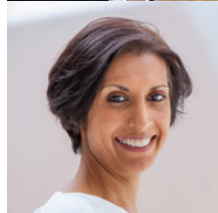
December
2020



Closed Doors report published



Commonweal match-funds QSA Big Give Christmas Challenge



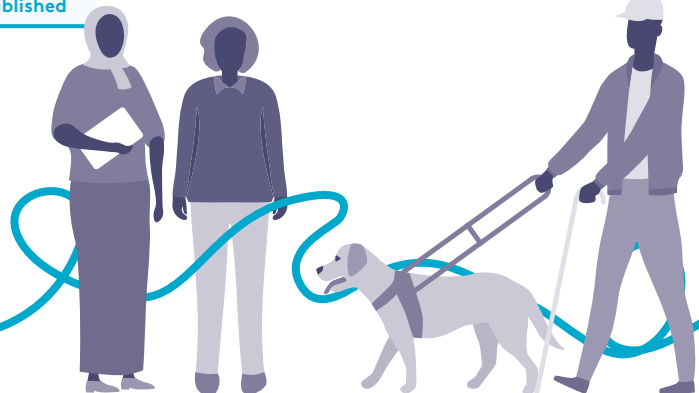
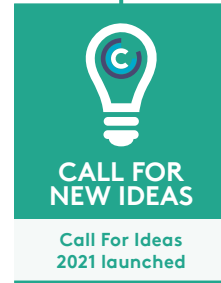
Sheldon Shillingford and Amarjit Bains appointed to Commonweal Board of Trustees

February
2021



Evaluation of the Rhea Project: Final Report published

April
2021



Three-year strategy

Strategic objectives

Year 1 priorities for 2020 were identified as:

1

Continue to support projects and groups that are frequently overlooked

2

Develop and implement an 'Impact Strategy' setting out how Commonwealth will influence policy, provision and practice

3

Further develop the 'Commonwealth Evaluation Framework' so all parties are clear on roles and expectations – enhancing the 'Partnership Experience' and putting replication from learning at the heart of what we do

4

Commence in 2020 our latest property-based project

5

Continue our programme of short-term feasibility and research project funding

6

Establish a further funding relationship with our principal benefactor, and others, to support the replication of 'tried and tested' models

7

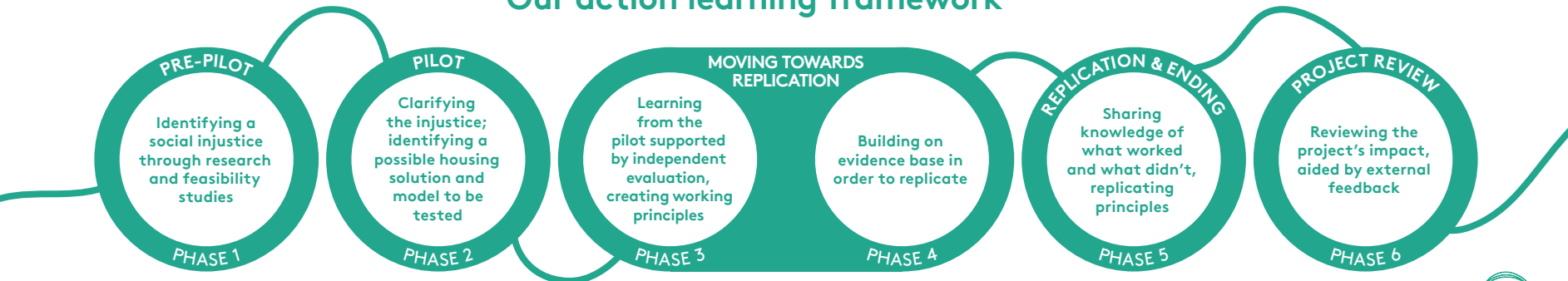
Implement the recommendations of the newly established HR Working Group to ensure our staffing and employment documents reflect our practice, our ethos and our values

In 2020-21 we have been spurred on to achieve these objectives with the help of all our dedicated staff, Trustees, funders, friends and expert project partners.

- As this report details, we have been delighted to keep our programme of existing housing-based projects continuing over the year, as well as continuing to promote learning from research and feasibility studies we have supported. This year this support has included a new essay anthology and accompanying podcast series, our bursary scheme for students at the University of Birmingham, and our learning from reports on exempt accommodation and the housing needs of victims of trafficking.
- We're pleased to have started work with two new organisations through our Call for New Ideas, and to have reopened this scheme – with continued support from our principal benefactor – for more candidates to share their ideas for housing-based social justice projects with us in the year ahead. We are tailoring this call for ideas towards organisations working with marginalised and overlooked communities, and specifically encouraging BAME organisations to approach us for support.

- We've also benefited from being selected to join Spring Impact's Scale Accelerator programme in 2020, designed to help charitable organisations scale up the impact of their work. This tailored support has helped us develop our Impact Strategy and Evaluation Framework, and prepared us to put these into practice in 2021-22 and beyond.
- Through the support of our Trustees and the executive leadership of the Deputy CEO on the HR Working Group, we have updated our key employment documentation to better reflect Commonweal's values and the flexibility and work-life balance options we operate. We have implemented a new HR system supporting all staff and managers throughout the organisation.
- Under the leadership of our new Chair, the Board and senior leadership team undertook a governance review ensuring the charity continues to operate efficiently and effectively and continues to learn and develop its internal process as well as its external relationships.

Our action learning framework



Learning together

Recently evaluated projects

Our aim for all our partnership projects is to learn together. To do this, we work with the knowledge and expertise of frontline organisations in the voluntary sector, to explore how tailored housing can help victims of social injustice.

Three of our pilot partnership projects received their final evaluations in 2020/21. From the housing needs of young carers, to survivors of domestic violence, to those caught in cycles of homelessness and unemployment – this chapter offers a summary of what we've learned this year with our expert project partners.



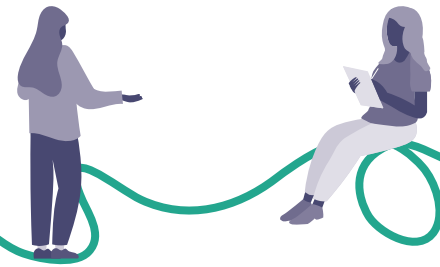
Rhea

For survivors of domestic and sexual violence, safe housing is crucial to rebuilding secure, independent lives.

Too many women have faced lockdown in dangerous home environments over the last year. Many survivors have had no option but to flee their homes – but not all can be supported by mainstream refuges. For these women, alternative supportive housing solutions are essential to their safety and survival.

Project overview

- The Rhea project is a supported housing service for women and their children fleeing domestic violence. It is run in partnership between Commonweal Housing, Solace Women's Aid and Southwark Council.
- The project aims to fill a gap in support for women who can't access mainstream refuge services, because they have older male children or due to having different support needs that can't be met by mainstream services.



2020-21 progress

- In February 2021, Commonweal and Solace released the final evaluation report of the Rhea Project.
- Conducted by independent evaluators, the report found that close partnership working at the heart of the project was key to its successes. The outcomes of this close partnership working included:
 - improved referral pathways
 - more appropriate referrals
 - smoother transitions
 - better outcomes overall for survivors of domestic violence.

What's next?

Commonweal and Solace are now working to share the learning from the final evaluation of the project with potential replicators.

In particular, we are working to emphasise the value of partnership working with local councils to practitioners already working with survivors of domestic violence.

 www.commonwealhousing.org.uk/projects/rhea



"I think it should be in every area of the country ... it has changed me, hopefully forever."

Rhea Final Evaluation Report
interviewee



SHORTLISTED
24Housing
Awards 2019

In partnership with

solace

Photo courtesy of Solace



Freedom2Work

Unemployment and homelessness often act together as a cycle, preventing too many people from securing lives of stability.

Among the thousands of people who have faced job losses and lack of employment options over the last year, many more people have been forced into homelessness and rough sleeping. Dual support needs arise for those experiencing unstable housing and unemployment: the need for safe, secure housing, and support to save resources to re-enter the job market.

Project overview

The Freedom2Work project is a partnership between Commonweal Housing and Rentstart. The project combines supported shared housing, advice and training on household management, jobhunting, CV writing and budgeting, and a matched savings scheme, to help clients overcome the barriers they face to employment.

In partnership with



Photo courtesy of Rentstart



FEATURED
Inside Housing





"This an amazing scheme which allows users to build themselves up at a pace not pressured but needed. Practical process great for getting back and used to responsible saving and planning. Opportunity to have the backing of experts and such a knowledge team like Rentstart. Guiding you through some difficult process of getting back to full work and confidence in managing and coping."

Freedom2Work client

2020-21 progress

- The final evaluation of the Freedom2Work project was completed and published in August 2020.
- The report found that the project had saved over £2m in costs to society, partly by helping clients to collectively save over £7,500 before matched-funding.
- The project has, to date, helped 74 people facing homelessness and unemployment, over three years of operation.

What's next?

- Commonweal and Rentstart have now begun the process of sharing the learning from our evaluations of the project with more potential stakeholders.
- As part of this process, the findings of the project's final evaluation were shared with 100 attendees at the first meeting of Crisis' PRS Community of Practice in January 2021 by Helen Watson, CEO of Rentstart.
- We are seeking to encourage replication of the partnership model and support model underpinning the project, to help more people facing homelessness and unemployment.

www.commonwealhousing.org.uk/projects/freedom2work



Move On Up

Young adult carers often face significant barriers to accessing safe, independent housing.

Young adult carers often face particular pressures in home, education and work environments, as well as in relationships within and outside their families as they transition into independent adulthood. The Learning and Work Institute has found that there is a lack of housing options available to support young adult carers through these critical periods – leading this group to face greater risks of housing instability and homelessness.

Project overview

- Move On Up is a shared housing project run in partnership with Quaker Social Action (QSA) for young adult carers aged 18-24. Run across four properties in East London, the model focuses on providing independent accommodation and up to 24 months' tailored support.
- The project aims to give young people the support they need to make an informed decision about their future, and hopefully, progress towards their goals.

2020-21 progress

In June 2020, we published the final evaluation of the project from the Learning and Work Institute, which found that the project effectively addresses a gap in housing and support provision for young adult carers. Since the evaluation launch, we have:

- Hosted a webinar event for Carers' Week 2020 on housing for young adult carers: featuring our evaluators from the Learning and Work Institute, project staff from QSA, Tim Loughton MP and a young carer with lived experience.
- Match-funded £10,000 raised through QSA's Big Give Christmas Challenge 2020, providing extra financial resources to the project as it continues.
- Had the project featured in Inside Housing, The Friend, and Stylist magazine who covered the testimonies of two clients in the project on Young Carers' Awareness Day 2021.

What's next?

- We are continuing our work with QSA to disseminate our learning from the Move On Up project, and to encourage replication of the project from more organisations working with care-experienced people.

 www.commonwealhousing.org.uk/projects/move-on-up





Dylan's story

When Dylan's mum found her depression was getting worse, he knew he had to "step up" – he found himself working after school to help with the rent, whilst looking after his mum and little sister.

In 2016, the family were removed from their home. His mum and sister were placed in a hostel, but Dylan wasn't allowed to join them because he was over the age of 18. A spell of sofa surfing with friends followed for almost two years.

He was put in touch with QSA's Move on Up housing project by a friend; it's unique in the UK in that it's exclusively available to young adult carers like Dylan.

During his time at Move on Up, Dylan has been able to make some plans of his own, away from his caring role, which he continues remotely: "I call my mum daily, and between my sister and I, we make sure she is taking her medication and going to hospital appointments."



"I've had a good experience here. They make sure you are alright. Make sure you're on top of things. It's good to know your next step, your next move. I've got my priorities sorted."

Dylan, Move On Up client



FEATURED
Stylist Magazine

In partnership with

—
QUAKER
SOCIAL
ACTION
—

Building together

Projects undergoing replication

Once our innovative projects have gone through their pilot stage, Commonweal helps to share the learning we have gathered, to encourage replication and influence policy and practice change.

We do this by disseminating the findings of independent evaluations of our projects, and partnering with new organisations to help encourage replication. In this chapter you'll hear about projects that are going through this stage.



No Recourse to Public Funds

Project overview

The NRPF project uses an innovative cross-subsidy model of shared accommodation to meet several critical housing needs simultaneously.

Commonweal leases properties to our partner Praxis, who provides day-to-day housing management and maintenance, specialist immigration advice and other required support to service users.

Praxis offers these properties to local authorities, who use them to ensure good-quality, supported accommodation is provided to destitute migrant families who they have a duty to accommodate under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989. Income received from these properties enables Praxis to provide a number of free bed spaces to destitute migrants with NRPF, thus protecting them from homelessness. The NRPF project received its final evaluation report after three years in development, in 2019.





*"I feel safe in my own space.
I can't believe it. [...] It's
changed my life and now when
I'm walking out I'm proud."*

Joanna, NRPF Project client

2020-21 progress

Throughout 2020, Praxis has continued to operate the NRPF project in very challenging conditions due to pandemic related lockdown measures. With the project approaching the end of the pilot in late 2021, Commonweal and Praxis are now working closely on a well-managed exit plan to close the project: a crucial stage in all Commonweal's pilot projects. Commonweal will continue to advocate for replication of the project, and its central cross-subsidy model, to more organisations who could deliver it in partnership in 2021-22.

 [www.commonwealhousing.org.uk/
projects/no-recourse-to-public-funds](https://www.commonwealhousing.org.uk/projects/no-recourse-to-public-funds)



WINNER
*Innovation in Housing
award at Homeless
Link Excellence
Awards 2019*

In partnership with

Praxis
COMMUNITY
PROJECTS



Joanna's story

Single, 60-year-old Joanna spent one year in the NRPF project. During this time, she was helped by a reputable solicitor (who had been found by the referring NGO, Freedom from Torture) who had gathered extensive evidence about abuse before she came to the UK seeking asylum and as well as about the potential risks if she were to be returned to her country of origin.

The solicitor had also identified exploitation in households where she worked following her asylum refusal in the UK over 10 years before. From this work she was identified through the National Referral Mechanism as a potential victim of modern-day slavery and thus entitled to Home Office support.

Photo courtesy of Praxis



Amari

Project overview

The Amari project provides step-down accommodation for women experiencing sexual exploitation and trafficking.

Through seven flats provided by Commonwealth, and tailored support provided by Solace, Amari offers 12-18 months of accommodation and support that enables women to recover from their trauma and become independent at the same time. They also receive at least three months' resettlement support, which means that they have a better chance of holding a lease in the private rented sector. This entails emotional and practical support in maintaining a tenancy. The final evaluation report for the Amari project was released in April 2019.

2020-21 progress

The project is working well post pilot stage, and has established a model that Solace sees as a key offer it provides. Solace is in ongoing conversations about potentially expanding the service.

 www.commonwealhousing.org.uk/projects/amari



"There is no other project like Amari. Without Amari, my clients would have been forced to accept totally unsuitable temporary accommodation with little or no support to help them set up their home."

Zoe Dexter, Helen Bamber Foundation



"Coming into my own flat it has given me such a boost, yeah there are problems but things have really changed. All the things I've been doing, they've all helped me make peace with the past."

Amari project client

© Kamaji Ojino

In partnership with

solace



The Pods

Project overview

The pods provide transitional, short-term accommodation for disused spaces and night shelters, offering greater privacy and personal space.

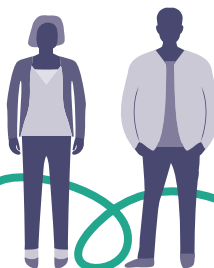
Each pod accommodates one person, with a bed, safe box, curtain and hook to hang clothes. The purpose of the pod was to provide an alternative to mattresses laid out on the floor of a shelter, offering guests very little privacy. Testing of the pods began at a night shelter in Hillingdon and then at the 999 Club in Deptford.

2020-21 progress

In May 2020, a report by independent evaluator Leila Baker found the pods were 'universally liked and welcomed' by guests and staff at the Crashpad Shelter, the 999 Club and the Islington Glass House. The report contains a Practical Framework for Replication designed for organisations to use and adapt the pods for their own clients.

We have continued to work through 2020 with Reed Watts and Housing Justice, who are working together to engage night shelters to use the Pods.

 www.commonwealhousing.org.uk/projects/the-pods



"We got back a great number of positive endorsements for the pods from staff, volunteers and guests. Guests 'love them' without exception and regardless of whether they get to sleep in them."

Leila Baker



**SHORTLISTED
24Housing
Awards 2018**





Peer Landlord

Project overview

Peer Landlord tests a model of shared housing that combines genuine affordability and stability alongside a supportive housing environment for those with lower general needs who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

The Peer Landlord is selected from the existing tenants, one of whom who volunteers to take responsibility for basic housing management, acting as the link between the household and the property manager. Additionally, they will also provide informal peer support to their housemates.

2020-21 progress

Depaul have been running an adaptation of the model using Commonweal-owned properties, called 'peer-led housing'. The project has continued successfully in 2020.

 www.commonwealhousing.org.uk/projects/peer-landlord



Simon's story

After a childhood of 49 foster homes, aged 16 Simon moved into a council flat.

In 2008 he moved with his pregnant girlfriend into private rented accommodation, but their relationship broke down. At the same time his employment contract ended. He was defined as 'non-priority homeless', so he sofa-surfed until becoming street homeless in 2012 at just 22.

With advice from the London Street Rescue (LSR) team at Thames Reach he moved into a hostel for a few months before being referred to the Peer Landlord project. He subsequently signed two tenancies: one as tenant, the second as peer landlord.



"Only now that I am in secure accommodation and employed can I make plans for my future, which include getting a full driving licence and training to be a paramedic."

Simon*, Peer Landlord client





REPLICATION

*Project model adapted
by Depaul*

In partnership with

**Thames
Reach**

DEPAUL
Homelessness has no place

Thinking together

Completed research and feasibility studies

Part of our new, three-year strategic ambition is to put our work 'at the forefront of imaginative thinking'.

That's because we believe creative, outside-the-box ideas are key to developing effective support solutions for those most marginalised in society.

We've continued to support early-stage research and feasibility studies over the last year with this imaginative ambition in mind. This section offers an overview of the studies we've supported, as well as our work to spread their findings to those in housing policy and practice.



Closed Doors

Project overview

Our new partner Hibiscus Initiatives was supported through Housing Helps to examine inequalities and injustices in appropriate and secure housing provision for female victims of trafficking who are also seeking asylum.

Published in December 2020, the final report found that the majority of victims of trafficking do not have access to safe housing, with some even facing homelessness. Findings in the report included:

- There are not enough safe house beds to meet the needs of the number of people going through the National Referral Mechanism (NRM)
- The vast majority of foreign national female trafficking survivors are housed in asylum accommodation when they are meant to be placed in safe houses, meaning they are facing inequalities because of their immigration status.
- Asylum accommodation is unsuitable and unsafe for the 45-day reflection period for those who have been identified as potential trafficking survivors. This places trafficking survivors at risk of re-traumatisation, re-exploitation and re-trafficking.

2020-21 progress

The report highlighted a number of policy-related recommendations, including the provision of sufficient safe housing, and improvements in training, monitoring and accountability in services.

We will continue to work with Hibiscus as it seeks to implement these recommendations in 2021.

 www.commonwealhousing.org.uk/majority-of-victims-of-trafficking-do-not-have-access-to-safe-housing



“Safe house provision is important for recovery and wellbeing of women who are survivors of trafficking. The government needs to address failings and gaps by increasing investment.”

Marchu Girma, Hibiscus CEO



FEATURED
Politics.co.uk



In partnership with

 **Hibiscus**
for social justice

Library image, posed by model
© Shutterstock Studios / shutterstock.com



Couples First?

Project overview

In 2018, research by Brighton Women's Centre and Homeless Link, funded by Commonweal Housing, investigated the nature of rough sleeping relationships, how women are treated within the couple and how they are treated by homeless services when they present as rough sleeping.

The research highlighted that many homeless women across the UK are in dangerous and abusive relationships in an attempt to protect themselves from the wider risks of living on the street. It identified that most services for homeless adults without children are for single homeless people. Single homeless services do not recognise the status of couples often seeing couples as too high risk to work with and so make the decision not to support couples and deny them shelter together, placing already vulnerable women at even greater risk.



2020-21 progress



One of the main recommendations from the report was the development of a tool-kit to advise homelessness services on how to work with rough sleeping couples. In April 2020, St Mungo's, the leading homelessness charity, published its toolkit on working with homeless couples, building on the findings of Couples First. It provides a set of practical guidelines and recommendations for housing and homelessness services and commissioners in the UK.

www.commonwealhousing.org.uk/homeless-women-entering-potentially-dangerous-relationships-in-attempt-to-stay-safe-on-the-streets



"There are some instances where a relationship can be completely healthy and supportive and provide comfort for people at a really difficult point in their lives. However, the research highlighted a large proportion of women in these relationships are being put at risk."

Lisa Dando, BWC



RECOGNITION
*Basis for St Mungos'
Homeless Couples and
Relationships Toolkit*

In partnership with

BWC



Exempt Accommodation: Research update

Project overview

In 2019, research published by Commonweal, Spring Housing Association and the Housing and Communities Research Group looked at social injustice in the non-commissioned 'exempt' accommodation sector in Birmingham.

It defined this as accommodation which is not commissioned by the local authority but is paid for using exempt provisions of Housing Benefit and Universal Credit regulations meaning landlords can access higher rent levels.

The research found that an estimated 11,000 vulnerable people in Birmingham alone are living in this accommodation, which has been left largely unmonitored and effectively 'unregulated' by Government. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) requires providers to meet only a loose requirement to provide 'care, support, or supervision' to its clients, and much of this accommodation is outside local authority licensing controls.

The report highlighted costly and unsafe environments in which residents receive support that is either too high or too low for their support needs. A lack of alternative accommodation means many are at 'crisis point' when they access this accommodation, and can be

forced to accept unsuitable and expensive housing. Vulnerable groups are more likely to be housed in this accommodation, including people fleeing abusive relationships, refugees and migrants, care leavers, rough sleepers, people facing mental health problems or substance misuse, and those in contact with the criminal justice system. Many residents face barriers to employment as the higher rent levels charged become unaffordable for many when they find low paid, insecure work.

2020-21 progress

There has been some welcome progress in national and local policy since the Exempt From Responsibility report was published. In October 2020, The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government published its National Statement of Expectations (NSE) for supported housing, as well as investing £3m in five new supported housing pilots to help improve standards. In November 2020, it launched the Social Housing White Paper, titled the Charter for Social Housing Residents, including welcome measures to strengthen the roles of the Regulator of Social Housing and the Housing Ombudsman, as well as focusing on consumer standards for residents of this sector – in line with two key recommendations from the 2019 report.



At a local level, the West Midlands Combined Authority Homelessness Taskforce and the Birmingham Safeguarding Adults Board have separately identified exempt accommodation as a priority. Birmingham City Council set up a taskforce to strengthen oversight of the sector, and commissioned a Quality Standards Framework for the sector, as well as a Charter of Rights, which was co-produced with and for residents of exempt accommodation.

The research has also been raised on multiple occasions in parliamentary debates and questions, as members of parliament continue to draw attention to the injustices in this sector. Commonweal will continue to support and advocate for change in this sector, to ensure the people it houses get the support and accommodation they need.

 [www.commonwealhousing.org.uk/
unregulated-exempt-accommodation](http://www.commonwealhousing.org.uk/unregulated-exempt-accommodation)



“One of the many reasons we were so pleased to partner with Commonweal on our research was the fact we knew our partnership wouldn’t end the moment the report was published.”

Dom Bradley, Spring Housing Association



In partnership with

Spring Housing Association

HCR
Housing and Communities Research

UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM



RECOGNITION
*Report findings
endorsed in Parliament*

The Jane Slowey Memorial Bursary



New Awardees for 2021

In its third year, Commonweal was pleased to award the Jane Slowey Memorial Bursary to four exceptional students from the University of Birmingham's School of Social Policy.

The bursary remembers Commonweal's late trustee Jane Slowey CBE, who studied at the University of Birmingham and who sadly passed away in 2017. Jane's extensive experience in the housing sector, as well as her imagination and her dedication to helping others, brought Commonweal's vision and ethos to life from its early days.

Rebecca Williams, Charlie Young, Csenge (Cicy) Földvári-Nagy and Katie Battie will each receive a bursary of £2,500 to support them in their final-year research, as well as informal mentoring support from Commonweal.

Memorial Celebration 2020

This year, Commonweal's annual event celebrating the work of the Jane Slowey Memorial Bursary recipients was held as an online webinar.



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

Shayne Saysell (BA Social Policy and Criminology) gave a presentation on her timely research into public perceptions of police-worn body cameras, and the impact of these on police legitimacy, in England and Wales.

Megan Scanlon (BA Social Policy and Criminology) presented her research into the impact of universal credit and housing instability on the rates of reoffending amongst prison leavers.

Shayne and Megan were able to meet members of Jane's family as well as Commonweal staff and trustees, explaining the findings of their outstanding research and the impact of the bursary on their studies and post-graduate plans.

See Megan and Shayne's presentations:

www.commonwealhousing.org.uk/events/jane-slowey-memorial-bursary-celebration-2020

Find out more about the Jane Slowey Memorial Bursary:

www.commonwealhousing.org.uk/jane-slowey-memorial-bursary



"It was a real honour and motivational boost to be one of the 2020 Commonweal bursary recipients which was created to honour the life and work of Jane Slowey CBE."

Rebecca Williams



"I'm excited to begin working on my research in association with Commonweal Housing on a topic I find so important."

Charlie Young



"This exciting opportunity will allow me to produce a high-quality research project on the effects of housing on educational attainment."

Katie Battie

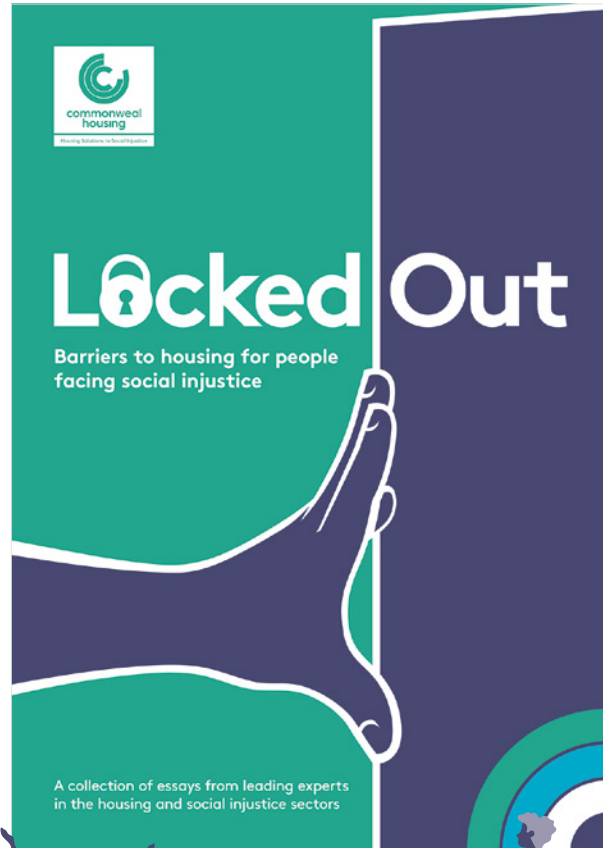


"Being awarded the Jane Slowey Memorial Bursary is one of the biggest honours of my life!"

Cicy Földvári-Nagy



Locked Out Anthology and Podcast



“Commonweal are exposed to a particularly broad set of issues and developing themes in the sector – and are increasingly striving to share this learning. This topical and thoughtful collection, written by subject matter experts, does just that.”

Jack Mactaggart, Chair of Commonweal Housing

Anthology

In the midst of a national housing crisis, it has become clearer than ever that too many people are locked out of safe, secure housing in the UK. But which groups are particularly at risk and why?

To answer this question, we brought the voices of nine charity experts together in a new essay anthology, drawing attention to the many links between housing and social injustice.

Our authors highlighted the impact of housing instability for women fleeing domestic violence, minoritised women, those exiting the criminal justice system and those experiencing broader periods of transition.

One essay from the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance found that the home is the most dangerous place for survivors of domestic abuse – with 68 per cent of deaths occurring in a victim's own home. An essay from Katharine Sacks-Jones, CEO of Become, the charity for children in care, found that housing is the primary issue young care leavers seek advice for – with 26 per cent of care leavers having sofa surfed and 14 per cent having slept rough.

Written against the backdrop of the coronavirus crisis over spring and summer 2020, many of these essays reflect on how these already vulnerable groups have been particularly impacted by the pandemic.

Podcast



When it comes to housing and social justice, we always want to keep the conversation going. So for the first time ever, we produced a podcast in 2020, to delve deeper into the issues we explored in the Locked Out anthology.

We spoke to each of our essay authors alongside more guests with professional expertise and lived experience of the issues covered in the Locked Out anthology. Over six episodes, we heard even more about how housing instability leads to, and exacerbates, a range of injustices for marginalised groups in society, as well as the added impact of the pandemic.

 www.commonwealhousing.org.uk/locked-out



“Local authorities are spending a billion pounds less each year on support services, because of the reductions in their budgets. [...] New homes and support when needed, we think, would make a fundamental difference to improving the situation regarding homelessness and affordability.”

Steve Douglas CBE, Locked Out Episode 1

“Social housing and housing for care leavers [has] the biggest impact on our mental health: because we’ve never had a home, we’ve never had stability, and we’ve never had security.”

Henrietta Imoreh, Locked Out Episode 5



FEATURED
Inside Housing

Innovating together

New research and feasibility studies

In March 2020, we launched our first Call for New Ideas, an invitation to potential new partners with ideas for innovative new housing solutions to social injustice.

The Call for New Ideas welcomed applications around our three organisational themes: the criminal justice system, violence against women and girls, and transitions. In May, we extended the call until the end of the calendar year, to allow organisations time to adapt to the pandemic.

Two new partnerships have begun as a result of the Call for New Ideas, with previous Commonweal partner Nelson Trust, and new partner Bthechange.



Call for New Ideas 2021

Social injustices across society have been laid bare by the coronavirus pandemic.

From people experiencing domestic violence facing lockdown with their abusers; to those exiting the criminal justice system with no guarantee of a safe home outside it; to those made more vulnerable to the virus by rough sleeping and unstable housing: the pandemic has widened the cracks in the system for the most marginalised in



our communities. We are conscious of the disproportionate impact of such injustices felt by too many in BAME communities in society.

Now more than ever, we believe it's vital to develop safe, secure and new housing solutions to these injustices: to give everyone affected by the pandemic the chance to build back lives of freedom and independence.

We are calling for organisations working with marginalised groups to contact us with bold, imaginative housing-based ideas for projects addressing social injustice. We are especially interested in project ideas related to our priority areas:

- The criminal justice system
- Violence against women and girls (VAWG)
- Systemic injustices that occur at points of transition in people's lives.

We may also consider exceptional applications that do not fall within these categories, and are especially welcoming applications from BAME-led and BAME focussed organisations.

There is no final deadline for submitting ideas, but we will conduct three reviews of applications submitted to us in 2021, in May, August and November – so if your project is time-sensitive, please do keep these dates in mind.

For more information and to apply, contact us at:

info@commonweal.org.uk

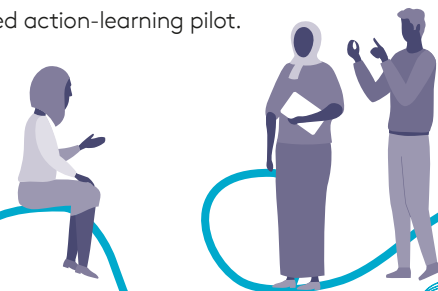
Nelson Trust

In 2020, Commonweal committed to funding our historic partner the Nelson Trust to begin its scoping work on an accommodation pathway in conjunction with its new women's centre in Bristol. Having completed feasibility research into the project idea thanks to Call for New Ideas funding in 2020, the Nelson Trust is appointing a dedicated Accommodation Officer funded by Commonweal to explore the housing options available for its project proposal in Bristol, and to take the housing project to the next stage.



Bthechange: Breathe

Breathe is an ambitious, innovative proposal for a Devon-based residential retreat for women leaving prison and at risk of returning. The proposal was submitted by Bthechange in response to Commonweal's call for ideas in 2020. We worked with Bthechange to support its writing of a feasibility study, which we will be exploring in more detail in early 2021. This will form part of a due diligence process to establish whether or not Commonweal can support Bthechange to turn this proposal into a property-based action-learning pilot.



Governance

Commonweal Housing is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity governed by its memorandum and articles of association, the Directors of the charity and its Trustees for the purpose of charity law.

Honorary President: Sir John Mactaggart Bt.

Company Secretary: Gary Medazoumian FCA

Directors/Board of Trustees

Jack Mactaggart

Amarjit Bains – appointed 14.12.2020

Russ Edwards

Sarah Jackson OBE

Rt. Hon. Fiona Mactaggart

Gary Medazoumian FCA

Sneha Patel

Prof. Jonathan Portes

Becky Rice

Sheldon Shillingford – appointed 14.12.2020

Jeremy Swain

Bankers

Barclays Bank PLC, 7th Floor, 180 Oxford Street, London W1D 1EA
Charity Bank Limited, Fosse House, 182 High Street, Tonbridge, TN9 1BE
CAF Bank Ltd (Charities Aid Foundation), 25 Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent ME19 4JQ

Solicitors

BDB Pitmans LLP, 50 Broadway, London SW1H 0BL

Auditors

haysmacintyre LLP, 26 Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4AG

Principal address

Unit 306, The Blackfriars Foundry, 156 Blackfriars Road, London SE1 8EN

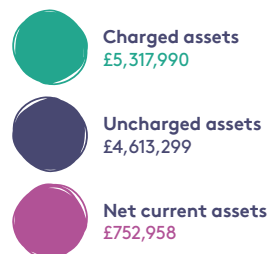
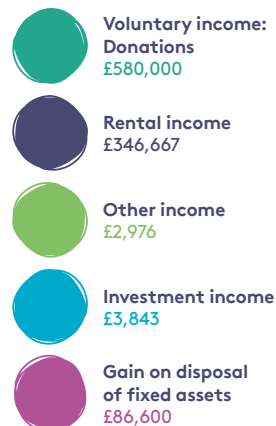
Registered address

2 Babmaes Street, London SW1 6HD

Company registration number: 5319765

Charity registration number: 1113331

Financial reports 2020/21



TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES (2014-2020)



Thank you to all our partners, funders and friends who have made it possible for us to continue supporting those facing social injustice, by developing innovative housing solutions together.



Making change count
for homeless people



Supporting the voluntary sector
working in the criminal justice system



daha

Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance



Tackling poverty and inequality



Housing and Communities Research



Housing Solutions to Social Injustice

We investigate,
test and share
housing solutions
to social injustice

Commonweal Housing

Unit 306, The Blackfriars Foundry

156 Blackfriars Road

London

SE1 8EN

0207 199 8390

info@commonweal.org.uk

www.commonwealhousing.org.uk

Published by Commonweal Housing

© Commonweal Housing 2021

All rights reserved