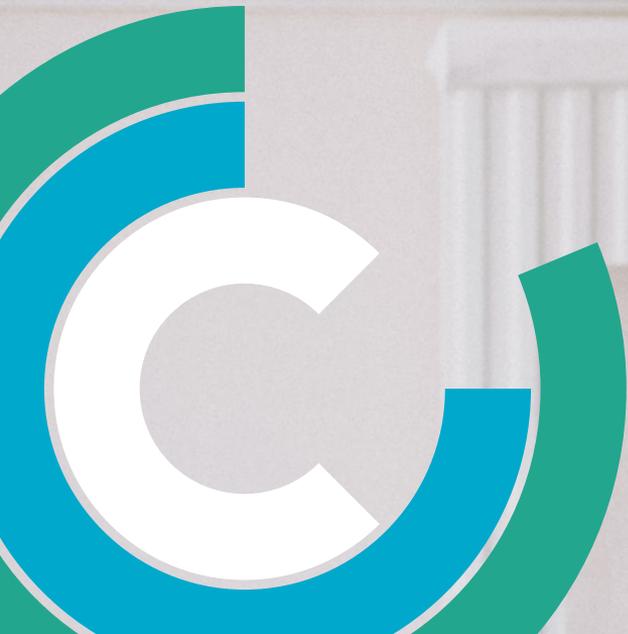


# Making room Building solutions

Annual Impact Review 2019/20





Published by Commonweal Housing  
© Commonweal Housing 2020  
All rights reserved





# Contents

Foreword	4
Our year in review	6
Introduction	8
Our three year strategy	10

## Room to grow

Projects undergoing replication	11
---------------------------------	----

---

No Recourse to Public Funds	12
Amari	14
The Pods	16
Peer Landlord	18

## Room to learn

Recently evaluated pilots	19
---------------------------	----

---

Freedom2Work	20
Move On Up	22
Rhea	24

## Room to explore

Research and feasibility studies	27
----------------------------------	----

---

Exempt From Responsibility?	28
Hosting Her	29
Closed Doors	30
Jane Slowey Memorial Bursary	31

## Room to innovate

Call for new ideas	32
--------------------	----

Finances	33
Governance	34



# Foreword

After a year as chair and eight years as trustee, Steve Douglas CBE will step down from both those roles this Summer. Jack Mactaggart will take over as Chair, having spent the last year as Vice Chair.

STEVE DOUGLAS CBE



This past year as Chair has been both rewarding and challenging. Rewarding, because Commonweal has now firmly established itself as a charity that seeks to better understand housing related social injustices, and is prepared to explore in detail the possible solutions.

Challenging, because the more we seek, the more injustices we discover. And even as we look back, we know that we are in the midst of uncertain times for many of the most vulnerable in society, for whom housing and different types of support can dramatically improve their life chances.

The theme of this year's review is making room, building solutions – which sums up how Commonweal has been working for all the years that I have been a trustee.

Our work has shown that by making room for partners to try new ideas, making room to learn from failure as well as success, and making room to grow and adapt to change – we give ourselves the best chance of building impactful solutions to some of the most intractable social injustices.

This year that theme is particularly important, as we are able to share the learning from evaluations of all our existing projects, including Move On Up, Rhea and Freedom 2 Work. We have now also begun the search for new ideas to pilot next year.

As I step down as Chair and as trustee of Commonweal, I am delighted to leave that task in the capable hands of Jack Mactaggart, who brings with him a wealth of knowledge and experience of the work of this small but impactful organisation. Jack will lead an expert and balanced board that welcomes two new trustees, Jeremy Swain and Sneha Patel, into its fold.

This is a crucial time for the work of an organisation like Commonweal – one that is committed to building solutions at its heart. I look forward to seeing where the next phase takes us, and wish the organisation – our board and staff; our partners, who are so important to our work; and those many individuals they seek to support – all the best for the future.

JACK MACTAGGART



Since Commonweal was founded in 2006, the need for affordable and appropriate housing has sadly become only more pressing. Indeed, the issue has been thrown into stark focus this year by the Coronavirus crisis, which has provided an unsettling reminder of the often fragile and unpredictable nature of our lives.

These last few months have in many ways been defined by our homes. We have spent more time in them than most people would ever care for – and yet for most of us the potential discomfort this scenario might create has been relatively minimal. It is times like these that should bring a heightened focus on the difficulties for those who live in unsafe, overcrowded, or unsuitable housing – and in particular, those who have no home at all.

It feels therefore that the challenge – and opportunity – to shape the future of housing for the better has never been so relevant.

It is with that tailwind that I become Chair of this exceptional, bold and vitally important charity. The organisation, and myself in particular, owe a huge debt of gratitude to Steve, who has

so masterfully had his hand on the tiller for the previous 12 months. Without his thoughtful leadership, sage advice and tireless commitment over the last eight years, Commonweal would not be in the robust health in which he leaves it.

As an organisation, we are clear-eyed about the challenges ahead. Our dedicated, highly capable and experienced team will be there at the front, trying to make room for those at the margins, tirelessly working together with our partners to address issues of social injustice through housing-based solutions.

It is both totally inspiring and a deeply humbling privilege to be a part of that process. I know next year I'll feel exactly the same way too.

# Our year in review



2019/20  
TARGET  
MET

**APRIL**  
2019



Evaluation of Amari project published

**MAY**  
2019



Jane Slowey Memorial Bursary applications open to students for a second year

**JUNE**  
2019



First Jane Slowey Memorial Bursary recipients present their research

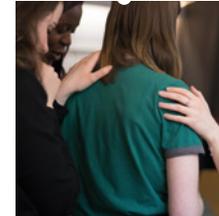
**JULY**  
2019



No Recourse to Public Funds project wins national award for innovation

Commonweal shortlisted for innovation in housing award at Charity Times Awards 2019

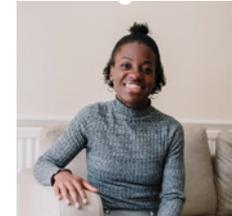
**AUGUST**  
2019



Rhea project shortlisted for 24housing Awards

Commonweal shortlisted for Women in Housing award

**SEPTEMBER**  
2019



Policy paper highlighting housing needs of young carers published



Steve Douglas CBE appointed as Chair of Trustees

**OCTOBER**  
2019

**No Recourse to Public Funds project shortlisted for The Guardian Public Service Awards**



**Pods on display at Housing Justice conference**

**NOVEMBER**  
2019



**Exempt From Responsibility? report published**

**DECEMBER**  
2019



**Foundations for Community-led Housing report by Future of London published, supported by Commonweal**



**Jeremy and Sneha become Commonweal trustees**

**JANUARY**  
2020

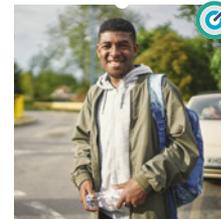


**Hosting Her report exploring host housing options for women published**

**Commonweal selected for Spring Impact's Scale Accelerator Programme**

**FEBRUARY**  
2020

**Report on barriers to modular housing published**



**Interim evaluation of Move On Up published**

**MARCH**  
2020



**Interim evaluation of Rhea project published**



**Call for new partners with big ideas opened**

# Introduction



**Uncertainty, not knowing what the weeks ahead hold, being fearful for the future – an experience shared by the whole world this year. Such times mean your focus can become very narrow: immediate survival with little capacity to think much beyond that.**

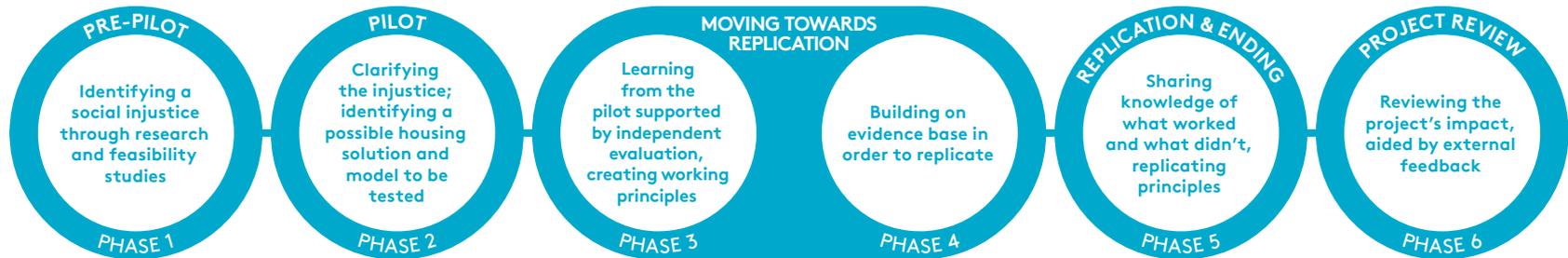
Sadly, this state of discomfort and uncertainty is a too-frequent experience for many of the people supported by Commonwealth's project partners and who are the focus of much of the research we have funded. Those at the margins of society, who are not always helped by the systems, services and programmes society puts in place.

The experience of Covid-19 has highlighted many issues with our society. People have started to look beyond the mainstream and increasingly recognised the margins. As the Government introduced new measures of support, society answered by saying *that's good, but what about this group who aren't covered?* And to a greater or lesser extent, the Government looked further to see who was missed out and what could be done for them – the self-employed, rough sleepers, the newly unemployed: those at the margins.

Commonwealth's role is to make room for front-line charities and others to enable them to develop, test and build new housing-based solutions to such social injustices – that's why the theme of this year's Annual Impact Review is *Making Room, Building Solutions*.

The chapters of this review highlight the stages we are at with our projects, as per our action-learning framework highlighted here. Chapter one provides an update from projects that have

## Our action learning framework



been moving towards replication. Chapter two shares learning from pilots whose final evaluation was published this year, and which will soon be moving towards replication. Chapter three shares findings from the early-stage research and feasibility studies completed this year, and the final section looks ahead to our call for new ideas, which we hope will spark the beginnings of new pilot projects, to be commenced in 2021.

The last year has seen change at Commonweal with a new Chair for the last 12 months and the arrival of new Trustees, a new focussed three-year strategy and a crash course in home working. Our new three-year strategy, outlined here, reflects our growing confidence in the role we can play and how best to maximise the impact of our charitable resources. Building upon previous initiatives, harnessing existing networks of support and goodwill and addressing some of the most frustrating and iniquitous areas of social injustice associated with the criminal justice system and tackling violence against women and girls. We are determined to deliver the aims and ambitions of the strategy and feel well placed to do so.

It has been a delight to have worked closely with our Chair Steve Douglas over the last year. I am grateful for all his wise words and good advice not just this year but over our many years of acquaintanceship and during his eight years on the Board of Commonweal. The Board will miss him as he steps down as a Trustee this year, but are undoubtedly in a good place because of his leadership.

Our new Chair, Jack Mactaggart, has had the opportunity to shadow Steve this last year and brings a lifetime of knowledge and awareness of Commonweal to the role. We have exciting times ahead and we are delighted that Sneha Patel and Jeremy Swain have joined us on that journey, bringing their respective (and much respected) professional skills and knowledge to our discussions.

Thank you for your interest and support for our work, and thank you to the staff team for maintaining our support to partners over what has been a challenging year for everyone.

# Our three year strategy

January 2020 to  
December 2022

The Board believes Commonweal should focus efforts for the next period on going deeper into areas of social policy and injustice where the charity has built up a track record of activity, networks of support and knowledge. Specifically, but not exclusively:

- Violence against women and girls
- The criminal justice system.

The Board also recognises that frequently systemic injustices occur at points of transition in people's lives – be that transitions to adulthood, transitions in accommodation from institutions to independence or other life transitions. We will continue to explore these failing intersections.

We will continually invest in and review our housing stock in line with current and potential future projects to ensure our portfolio remains financially sustainable, economically beneficial, relevant and useful to our projects.

By December 2022 we will have grown our project and research portfolio, enhanced further the impact of the learning from our projects and become increasingly recognised as a leading independent facilitator and enabler of new thinking and new housing solutions to social injustice. We will be well on the way to achieving the Board's strategic five-year vision:



**By 2025 Commonweal will be widely viewed as a go-to organisation for innovative and deliverable housing-based solutions to social injustice – at the forefront of imaginative thinking.**

## Strategic objectives

**Our priorities for 2020, as first steps for the next three years, will be to:**

1. Continue to support projects and groups that are frequently overlooked
2. Develop and implement an 'Impact Strategy' setting out how Commonweal will influence policy, provision and practice
3. Further develop the 'Commonweal 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.

# Room to grow

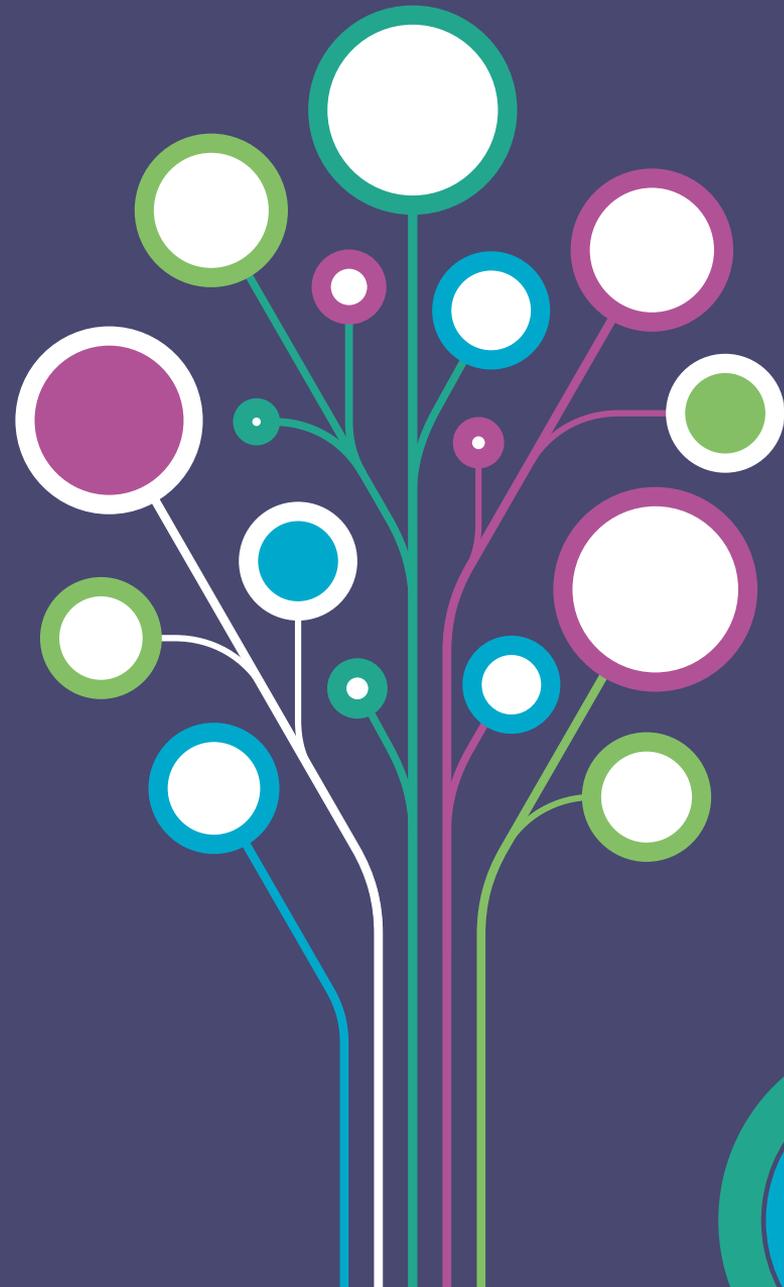
Integral to Commonwealth's strategy is our aim to share the learning from our successful pilot projects through replication – allowing others to benefit from our trying and testing.

We disseminate findings from evaluations of our projects, and work with potential replication partners to grow and adapt our pilots. The projects highlighted in this section had all completed their final evaluation before the beginning of this year.

In this section we provide an update on their progress in moving towards replication.

## In this section

No Recourse to Public Funds	12
Amari	14
The Pods	16
Peer Landlord	18



# No Recourse to Public Funds

Every year, hundreds of thousands of people across the world are forced to leave their homes or seek a new life.

Some people seek refuge in the UK, but are faced with a hostile environment. Seeking leave to remain in this environment can be a long process, throughout which many are not allowed to work or access public funds, leaving them destitute.

## Project overview

The No Recourse to Public Funds Project (NRPF) provides housing for single female migrants. It does so by using income for housing migrant families, whom local authorities have a duty to house, to provide free bed spaces for single women who would otherwise be destitute. Both families and single migrant women receive specialist immigration advice and holistic support from Praxis.

## 2019/20 progress

- Praxis are continuing to work with this client group, and are committed to doing so long-term. We are continuing to share the learning from our evaluation released in 2018, and subsequent learning since publication.

## What's next?

- Commonweal is working with Praxis to ensure they can continue to provide housing and support for destitute migrants after the pilot ends in 2022. We are looking to engage with other organisations working with destitute migrants.



*"It's the place that's given me light. It made me know the value of living."*

Praxis resident



*"This is a really impressive financial model that provides some of the most vulnerable people in the UK with safe and secure housing."*

David Ireland, Director, World Habitat



Shortlisted  
The Guardian Public Service Awards

Winner  
Homeless Link Excellence Awards



## Sara's story

Sara was referred to us after she fled domestic abuse. An immigration advisor at Praxis supported her to submit a Destitution Domestic Violence Concession application, which enabled her to have access to public funds for three months.

During this time she was referred to a solicitor to submit a settlement application as a victim of domestic violence, which was successful.

Her confidence grew immensely over the short time she was in our accommodation, and her English also improved. She was supported to apply for benefits and to access temporary accommodation with Redbridge.

In partnership with



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

# Amari

**After emergency accommodation, there is a lack of housing and support available to women who are fleeing sexual exploitation.**

Transitional accommodation is rare, and many of these spaces don't offer the support needed for a woman who has faced sexual exploitation or involvement in prostitution to gain independent living skills. Without the provision of second stage housing for victims of sexual exploitation, there is a risk that many of these women will fall into homelessness or return to the lives they left behind.

## Project overview

The Amari project is run by Solace in partnership with Commonweal. The project offers secure post-emergency housing combined with wrap-around support for women exiting sexual exploitation, helping them to begin safe, independent lives of their own.

Commonweal and Solace built the Amari project in 2016 with learning taken from Chrysalis, a previous Commonweal project which explored the benefits of transitional housing combined with support.

## 2019/20 progress

- An evaluation of the project was released in April 2019. It found that the project's combination of secure housing, and tailored support from Solace were key to helping residents move on from trauma.
- Amari is also helping local authorities to work with vulnerable individuals who are typically seen as 'hard to engage with'; preventing them from falling into cycles of homelessness.

## What's next?

- The Amari Project is now in its fourth stage of Commonweal's progress framework: Moving Towards Replication. Commonweal will be actively promoting the project to other organisations working with survivors of sexual exploitation.



***"There is a dire shortage of longer-term accommodation with specialist support for women sexually exploited through trafficking or prostitution. This amazing partnership between Commonweal Housing, Solace and London Councils has enabled some of the most marginalised women to get the vital support and safe accommodation they need to cope, recover and move forward into independence."***

Gill Herd, Senior Manager, Solace Women's Aid



Featured in  
*The Guardian*



## Aferdita's story

Aferdita was granted five years' leave to remain in the UK, and her two children were allowed to join her. Together, they have been housed in a council flat in Lambeth, south London. Aferdita says the project provided her with a home that has made her feel safe for the first time in her life.

*"For someone like me, who has been through a lot, it's like you are born again. Now I will start to live another life and leave everything behind."*

In partnership with



**solace**

[www.commonwealhousing.org.uk/  
projects/amari](http://www.commonwealhousing.org.uk/projects/amari)

# The Pods

Every night, more than 4,000 people are estimated to be sleeping rough in England.

Some may be accommodated in night shelters and other short-term emergency accommodation, where the Pods could offer the privacy, dignity and space to rest which they deserve.

## Project overview

The Pods were built in response to research carried out by Thames Reach and Commonweal in 2016 into the living conditions of migrant workers in North London.

This research found that these workers needed a form of short-term, transitional accommodation, which could be assembled when needed and packed up when their work had finished. ReedWatts Architects designed the flat-packed, plywood Pods to serve this short-term need.

## 2019/20 progress

- The Pods in their original design were installed in three new locations across London in 2019: the Glasshouse in Islington, the 999 Club in Deptford and the Pilion Trust's Crashpad.
- An evaluation of the Pods published May 2020 found they offered greater privacy, storage, safety and comfort. It offers a toolkit for shelters to assess the appropriateness of the Pods for their own location.
- A similar design for low-level pods has been used at the Redbridge Cold Weather Centre at Islington Ilford Salvation Army, by ReedWatts Architects in collaboration with George Fisher.
- There has been interest in running the Pods in shelters across the globe, including in Canada, the USA, and Europe.

## What's next?

- Through this partnership, the Pods have the potential to reach their network of 125 projects providing shelter to 8,750 guests over winter.
- ReedWatts are adapting the design of the Pods to suit a wider range of locations. You can keep up with their work at [reedwatts.com/commonweal-pods](https://reedwatts.com/commonweal-pods).
- ReedWatts, Housing Justice and Commonweal will be publishing research in 2021 to support night shelters to explore the suitability of the Pods for their guests.



*“There were tears of joy when the men and women sleeping there this evening saw the improved facilities. The shelter started on the floor, then we got camp beds, and now we have pods, with proper mattresses. There’s a chalkboard space on each pod for the guest’s name – it’s their own space, private, and with some comfort for a safe and warm night’s sleep.”*

Iford Salvation Army



In partnership with



HOUSING JUSTICE

[www.commonwealhousing.org.uk/projects/the-pods](http://www.commonwealhousing.org.uk/projects/the-pods)



# Peer Landlord

For some people, the line between sustaining a tenancy and becoming homeless can be very thin. Support and advice at the right time can be crucial, but may not be necessary all the time.

Many people that are close to or already experiencing homelessness can live independently but may need the option of a safety net that the private rental sector doesn't provide.

## Project overview

Peer Landlord is a supportive shared housing model for individuals with lower support needs. The Peer Landlord is a tenant who volunteers to take responsibility for basic housing management, acting as the link between the household and the property manager as well as providing informal peer support to housemates.

## 2019/20 progress

- The Peer Landlord model is now embedded within Thames Reach's service offer and the model is in the early stages of replication, including by youth homelessness charity Depaul.



*"I enjoy being peer landlord. My responsibilities are so varied."*

Peer Landlord tenant

## What's next?

- We will continue to share the learning from the evaluation of the Peer Landlord pilot project, and to advise and support organisations wishing to adopt, adapt, and learn from it.



## 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 has signed two tenancies, one as tenant, the second as peer landlord.

In partnership with



[www.commonwealhousing.org.uk/projects/peer-landlord](http://www.commonwealhousing.org.uk/projects/peer-landlord)

# Room to learn

This year we have published final evaluations for a number of our projects. This is a key stage at which to share the learning from the project's pilot phase and lay the foundations for moving towards replication.

This section shares the findings from those evaluations, and their recommendations for the future of these project.

## In this section

Freedom2Work	20
Move On Up	22
Rhea	24



# Freedom2Work

**Unemployment is one of the biggest barriers to stability for those experiencing homelessness.**

Unstable temporary housing, fluctuating benefits, and a lack of training and advice on how to re-enter the job market can all hinder a person's access to stable work and accommodation.

## Project overview

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

## 2019/20 progress

The final evaluation of Freedom 2 Work, published in June 2020, found that the project is successfully providing clients with 'a protected way back into the world of work'.

- Nearly 41% of clients moved on from the project into private rental sector accommodation
- 47% of clients were in employment at the time of leaving the project
- The project has supported 74 clients over three years.



## What's next?

- The evaluation recommends that the project be adapted in new areas by other organisations, finding that there are multiple benefits for councils, organisations and individuals at risk of homelessness.
- Commonweal will be promoting the project's partnership model and learning to organisations across the housing sector, encouraging others to adapt it further.



*"This an amazing scheme which allows user[s] to build themselves up at a pace not pressured. [...] This turned out to be one of the best decisions I ever made!! As it has been the catalyst to everything that's positive in my life right now."*

Freedom2Work client

In partnership with



[www.commonwealhousing.org.uk/  
projects/freedom2work](http://www.commonwealhousing.org.uk/projects/freedom2work)

# Move On Up

There are thought to be at least 376,000 young adult carers in the UK, many of whom are at risk of certain factors relating to homelessness, such as high tension and breakdowns in family relationships.

Due to their caring responsibility, many young adult carers will not have the financial resources or the social relationships with peers needed to make a positive move out of the family home. Yet research conducted by Quaker Social Action and confirmed by the Carers Trust showed that there was no specific housing provision for young carers.

## Project overview

Move On Up is a shared housing project run in partnership with Quaker Social Action 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 the young people the support they need to make an informed decision about their future, and hopefully, progress towards their goals.



## 2019/20 progress

- In September 2019 we published a policy paper on young adult carers' housing needs.
- In January 2020 we coordinated a joint letter from housing and homelessness charities to the Minister for Care.
- In June 2020 we launched the final evaluation during Carers Week. Key findings:
  - Move On Up is having a positive impact on residents, including providing respite from caring, improved relationships with family members, and improved outcomes in learning and employment
  - There is scope for the model to be sustained and replicated
  - The housing needs of young adult carers are not recognised in national policy, nor the response of housing providers and carers organisations to this group.



## What's next?

- Commonweal is working to share the learning from the project to influence policy and practice. Key recommendations:
  - Government to review the Carers Action Plan, including undertaking a review of the housing needs of young adult carers.
  - Local authorities to ensure Transition Assessments are conducted in partnership with the housing authority and identify a 'duty to refer' where appropriate.
  - Mainstream housing providers should establish partnerships with organisations such as carers services, to address the housing needs of young adult carers in their localities, which are currently all too often overlooked.

## Chrystal's story

Chrystal, 26, has taken care of her mum on and off since she was 13. Her responsibilities had become unmanageable at the point her mum was taken into care. After university, Chrystal moved back home but was quickly forced to leave.

"I was basically made homeless, they wouldn't allow me to stay on the tenancy without my mum. So my support worker referred me to Move On Up."

Chrystal has a passion for dance, something she didn't have time for until now.

"I have more time for myself, I am able to do more things, and I'm able to concentrate on my dance work. I want to focus on my career so I can reach the goals that I want to achieve in the coming years."

In partnership with

—  
QUAKER  
SOCIAL  
ACTION  
—

[www.commonwealhousing.org.uk/  
projects/amari](http://www.commonwealhousing.org.uk/projects/amari)

# Rhea

**Many women fleeing domestic violence find refuges can be inaccessible and unsuitable.**

In some cases women are denied access to refuges as they have an older male child with them; or they may need a different level of support than a refuge can offer. For some women, the choice is between staying in an abusive relationship or becoming homeless.

## 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.



## 2019/20 progress

- In March 2020, Commonweal released an Interim Evaluation of the project which found widespread benefits of the partnership model. The report found that women and their children gained improvements in their confidence, finances and relationships with their children, and residents became better equipped to manage their wellbeing and safety from perpetrators, becoming able to 'hope and dream for the future'.

## What's next?

- Commonweal will be promoting the findings of the evaluation report published summer 2020 and making contact with other women's organisations and local authorities who can take on the learning from this project.



Shortlisted  
24housing Awards 2019



*“The evaluators have highlighted the benefits of safe and stable accommodation for survivors of domestic abuse and their children, coupled with specialist support from Solace. There is a clear case for the development of similar projects in other areas, and we would encourage anyone from local authorities or organisations interested in doing so to get in touch.”*

Amy Doyle, Deputy CEO, Commonweal Housing

In partnership with



[www.commonwealhousing.org.uk/  
projects/rhea](http://www.commonwealhousing.org.uk/projects/rhea)

**“It wouldn’t have got off the ground without their empowerment, they were always cheerleading for our success.”**

Judith Moran

CEO of Quaker Social Action

Partner in Move On Up project



# Room to explore

A key part of Commonwealth's action-learning work is our support for research into areas of social injustice to help determine whether housing could be part of a solution. These studies test the feasibility of ideas for new projects, or they can be used to form practical recommendations for providers and policymakers.

We are also pleased to support university students to carry out final year research into housing and social injustice, through our bursary in memory of former Commonwealth trustee Jane Slowey OBE.

This section provides an update on the progress of the bursary, and shares the findings from research and feasibility studies published this this year.

## In this section

Exempt from Responsibility	28
Hosting Her	29
Closed Doors	30
Jane Slowey Memorial Bursary	31



# Exempt from Responsibility

Ending social injustice in  
exempt accommodation



## Overview

This report examined social injustice in the exempt accommodation sector in Birmingham. This accommodation is not commissioned by the local authority, but is paid for using exempt provisions of Housing Benefit and Universal Credit regulations.

## Key findings

- An estimated 11,000 vulnerable people in Birmingham alone are living in 'exempt' accommodation.
- There is an 'accountability deficit' in this sector. Providers must meet only a loose requirement to offer 'care, support, or supervision' to clients, and much of this accommodation is outside local authority licensing controls. As a result, landlords can claim high rents with little accountability.

## Recommendations

The report calls for the Government to address the 'accountability deficit' in this sector, including by strengthening criteria in the Housing Benefit and Universal Credit Regulations and giving stronger powers to the Regulator of Social Housing.

## 2019/20 progress

- Successful launch events were held in London and Birmingham.
- Birmingham City Council and the West Midlands Combined Authority have committed to adopting the report's recommendations.
- Commonweal has had positive meetings with key stakeholders, including from DWP, MHCLG, and the Regulator of Social Housing.

## What's next?

- MHCLG is due to publish a National Statement of Expectations for Supported Accommodation Providers, and Commonweal is working to feed into Government's 'oversight regime' in this sector.

In partnership with

**Spring** Housing Association

**HCR** Housing and Communities Research

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

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

# Hosting Her

Exploring host housing options for women



## Overview

Host housing schemes enable members of the public to offer a room in their house to someone in need. This research examined how these schemes can support some homeless women when delivered well.

## Key findings

- Women-specific hosting schemes are a vital stepping-stone towards independent living for some women facing homelessness, particularly for those having to choose between male-dominated hostels or street homelessness, and for clients with no recourse to public funds.
- New hosting schemes have recently started to be developed for survivors of domestic violence and modern slavery.
- With the right host, these schemes can provide a 'supportive environment' that can be complementary to overall recovery. When delivered well, hosting can expand the housing options available to vulnerable women while they search for longer-term housing.

## Recommendations

The report advocates a collaborative approach between host housing services and women's services, to develop projects that are tailored to women's needs and prioritise women's safety. It calls for local authorities to work with hosting schemes to ensure suitable move on accommodation is available.

## 2019/2020 progress

- Report launched with a dynamic roundtable discussion event, including representatives from housing providers, women's organisations and hosting schemes.
- The report gained coverage in industry press and was widely shared online.

## What's next?

Commonweal will continue working and making connections with organisations involved in hosting and women's housing, to explore how the findings of this study can be practically applied.

In partnership with Lisa Young and Tessa Horvath, independent researchers

[www.commonwealhousing.org.uk/  
host-housing-for-women](http://www.commonwealhousing.org.uk/host-housing-for-women)

# Closed Doors

Gaps in secure and appropriate housing provision for potential victims of trafficking seeking asylum

## Overview

Following their successful application to the Housing Helps competition, last year Hibiscus Initiatives were awarded £10,000 to examine the injustices and gaps in housing support provision for women who are formally identified as potential victims of trafficking.

Currently in draft, this report reflects on two elements of housing provision: safe houses – safe, supported housing for victims of trafficking; and asylum (NASS) accommodation. Under ECAT Article 12, the UK is required to provide “appropriate and secure” accommodation to all potential victims of trafficking. Yet this research finds thousands of victims of trafficking are not receiving the right housing or support.

In April 2020 a new provider was awarded the Victim Care Contract, with implementation beginning in November 2020. Hibiscus and Commonwealth will be working to influence national policy and provision to ensure victims of trafficking get the accommodation and support they need.

The report is to be published in summer 2020.



In partnership with

 **Hibiscus**  
for social justice

[www.commonwealhousing.org.uk/](http://www.commonwealhousing.org.uk/)  
[link]

# The Jane Slowey Memorial Bursary



**In its second year, we were delighted to award the Jane Slowey Memorial Bursary to two more exceptional students from the School of Social Policy at Jane's alma mater: the University of Birmingham.**

Commonweal set up the Jane Slowey Bursary in 2017 to remember our dear friend and trustee, Jane. A valued member of our board for ten consecutive years, Jane was a pioneering voice in the third sector, and a champion of supportive housing solutions to social injustice.

Megan Scanlon and Shayne Saysell each received £2,500 to support them in their final-year research into the housing needs of ex-offenders, and police legitimacy and procedural justice, respectively. Megan and Shayne will also be able to access mentoring support from Commonweal as they complete their studies and prepare to begin their careers.

Megan said:

**"I am truly thankful for this unmissable opportunity and delighted that I have been a successful recipient of the Jane Slowey Memorial Bursary."**

Shayne said:

**"I especially am looking forward to working with Commonweal Housing, exploring how housing agencies can work in partnership with the criminal justice system to help bring about positive change to community relations as a whole."**

In June 2020 it was also announced that four University of Birmingham students would receive funding through the bursary, for the academic year 2020/21. The students will be researching a range of subjects related to social injustice and housing including youth homelessness, social housing estates and gang crime, international approaches to homelessness, and the impact of poor housing on educational achievement.

# Room to innovate



## Call for new ideas

In 2020/21, we are looking for new ideas for our next property-based project. We want to support charitable organisations with ideas for innovative housing projects to tackle social injustice.

We are especially interested in project ideas related to our priority areas, which include:

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

We are looking for organisations to carry out a short-term study to establish the feasibility of an idea and proposed model. This initial study will be used to determine whether the idea could operate as a property-based pilot project. If there is scope for a pilot to go ahead, Commonwealth would look to support the organisation to initiate and run their own pilot in 2021.

We have opened the Call for New Ideas indefinitely, in order to make room for the solutions to the post-Coronavirus crisis world to emerge. If you have an exciting idea, would like to apply, or want to find out more, please visit:  
[commonwealhousing.org.uk/partner-with-us/call-for-new-ideas](https://commonwealhousing.org.uk/partner-with-us/call-for-new-ideas)

### What our partners said...

**"The length of funding was so key, we'd never had anything like this before [...] It felt like a proper partnership [...] The external evaluation was such a useful, growing experience, it provided us with something really tangible to talk about."**

*Helen Watson, CEO of Elmbridge Rentstart  
Partner in Freedom 2 Work project*

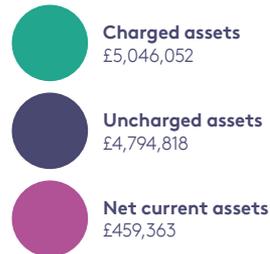
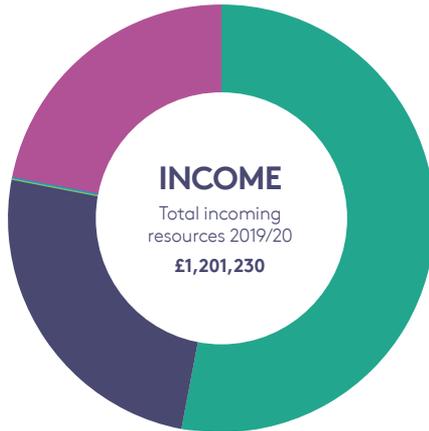
**"It wouldn't have got off the ground without their empowerment, they were always cheerleading for our success."**

*Judith Moran, CEO of Quaker Social Action  
Partner in Move On Up project*

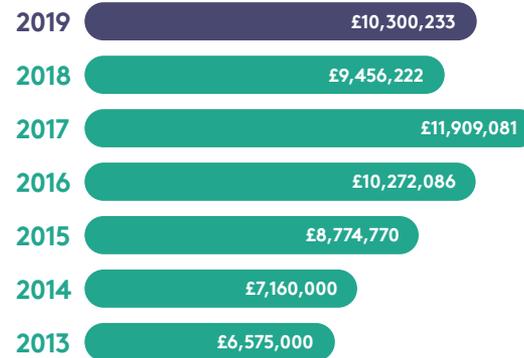
**"They facilitated the conversations in a way we couldn't have done on our own. Being able to say we have proven impact, this has worked in other areas, gave us strength in numbers [...] it showed we were part of something bigger."**

*Joy Doal MBE, CEO of Anawim  
Partner in Re-Unit project*

# Financial reports 2019/20



## TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES (2013-2019)



Full details of our finances can be found at: [www.commonwealhousing.org.uk/Finances](http://www.commonwealhousing.org.uk/Finances)

# 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

Steve Douglas CBE

Gary Medazoumian FCA

Jack Mactaggart

Rt. Hon. Fiona Mactaggart

Prof. Jonathan Portes

Russ Edwards

Sarah Jackson OBE

Becky Rice

Sneha Patel – appointed 09.12.19

Jeremy Swain – appointed 09.12.19

## Bankers

Barclays Bank PLC, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor, 180 Oxford Street, London W1D 1EA  
Charity Bank Limited, Fosse House, 182 High Street, Tonbridge, TN9 1BE

## 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

Thank you to all our partners and friends, without your support we wouldn't be able to develop housing solutions to social injustice.



Making change count  
for homeless people



**BRIDGES**  
Fund Management



**BWC**

**Cheyne**  
Capital

**CITY  
BRIDGE  
TRUST**



**ef** Esmée  
Fairbairn  
FOUNDATION

**FUTURE OF  
LONDON**

**GROVE END  
HOUSING**

**Hibiscus**  
for social justice



**NACCOM**  
THE NO ACCOMMODATION NETWORK

**Praxis**  
COMMUNITY  
PROJECTS



**QUAKER  
SOCIAL  
ACTION**

**REED  
WATTS**

**solace**

**Spring** Housing  
Association

**Thames  
Reach**

**Trust for London**  
Tackling poverty and inequality

  
**UNIVERSITY OF  
BIRMINGHAM**

  
**HCR**  
Housing and Communities Research

**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](mailto:info@commonweal.org.uk)

[www.commonwealhousing.org.uk](http://www.commonwealhousing.org.uk)

