

Over half a million for new ideas to tackle homelessness in the community

St Martin-in-the-Fields Charity announces recipients of new Access to Accommodation Fund

St Martin-in-the-Fields Charity, the UK-wide homelessness charity, is today unveiling the first eight projects to receive over £600,000 of funding through its new Access to Accommodation Fund which aims to help grassroots organisations develop, test and scale creative housing solutions to homelessness in their communities.

From re-purposing derelict buildings in Great Yarmouth to building modular homes on unused land in Oxford, all eight projects are designed by teams working closely with those experiencing homelessness. The projects tackle unmet local needs and will receive significant funding from the charity over the next three years.

Grassroots organisations with a turnover of up to £2 million were invited to apply for up to £100,000. The final eight were selected from nearly 100 applications. Successful projects needed to demonstrate a clear understanding of the experiences of those facing homelessness; involve people with experience of homelessness in their design, development or delivery; and have the potential to be scaled up or replicated elsewhere.

All eight projects promise new approaches to specific challenges, from the lack of move-on accommodation for female victims of abuse to the need for accessible accommodation for those with mobility needs experiencing homelessness.

Aimed at small and grassroots organisations, the Access to Accommodation Fund was developed by **St Martin-in-the-Fields Charity** in direct response to reports from frontline workers that access to housing is one of the biggest challenges for people experiencing homelessness. According to the Charity's 8th annual UK-wide survey of frontline workers published last Autumn, 83% said it was difficult to access

suitable accommodation and 55% of respondents said this had got worse in the last 12 months.

From 29th April, organisations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland will be eligible to apply for the same funding of up to £100k, spent over a maximum of three years.

Commenting on the new Access to Accommodation Fund, Duncan Shrubsole, Chief Executive Officer said:

“Locally based homelessness charities are on the frontline of our housing crisis facing rising need and ever greater challenges in trying to find affordable appropriate accommodation to rehouse people in. We hope this programme demonstrates that new accommodation solutions are still possible and that it will encourage government, local councils and other funders to invest in similar such initiatives so more people can have a safe and secure place to call home”.

Cornerstone Supported Housing & Counselling has secured £35,510 for its proposal to adapt two existing properties in Durham and Hartlepool to create fully accessible, self-contained homes for people experiencing homelessness with mobility needs, doubling the amount of accessible homes the organisation can provide. Commenting on their success Steve Vasey, CEO of Cornerstone Supportive Housing & Counselling, said:

“There just isn’t enough accessible housing for those at risk of homelessness. We were trying to support a double amputee and there, quite literally, was nowhere he could go. This opportunity to double our capacity promises to be a game changer for people living with disabilities who find themselves also facing homelessness. It’s not just about accommodation but support too – having someone to advocate for you as you re-build and find a permanent home. It’s exciting to think our work could provide a model for other parts of the country.”

More information is available here:

[Access to Accommodation Fund: Grants for Local Housing Solutions – St Martin-in-the-Fields](#)

Notes to editors

The successful projects are as follows:

- Herring House Trust (Great Yarmouth) will bring a long-derelict property in central Great Yarmouth back into use, creating three new move-on bedrooms for people who are ready to move on from hostel accommodation but not yet able to live fully independently.
- Cowley St John Parochial Church Council (Oxford) will create four high-quality modular homes on unused church land in Oxford, providing stable accommodation alongside wraparound support for people experiencing homelessness.
- Zinthyia Trust (Leicester) will pilot a new move-on housing project for 30 single women survivors of abuse with no recourse to public funds (NRPF), providing safe, transitional accommodation and structured support.
- Refugees Welcome Homes will expand its lodging scheme for refugees in Bristol, which matches refugees with hosts who have a spare room, provides ongoing support to both hosts and lodgers, and helps refugees towards independent living.
- The Bus Shelter Dorset (Weymouth) will deliver a new supported move-on housing model for people leaving crisis accommodation who need ongoing support to sustain housing while entering work.
- Cornerstone Supported Housing & Counselling (Durham & Hartlepool) will adapt two existing properties to create fully accessible, self-contained homes for people with mobility needs experiencing homelessness.

- Women's Aid Luton (Luton) will install a self-contained emergency modular unit within the secure grounds of an existing refuge, providing immediate, safe accommodation for those who cannot access refuge spaces.
- Independence Initiative (Bootle, Liverpool) will convert an existing space into three new en-suite rooms to provide high-quality transitional accommodation for up to nine people per year.

About [St-Martin-in-the-Fields | UK homeless charity \(smitfc.org\)](https://www.smitfc.org)

St Martin-in-the-Fields Charity is a homelessness charity that works UK-wide and year-round. Its vision is for everyone to have a safe place to call home and the support they need to keep it. Its work extends across all four nations – at the individual, community, regional, and national levels. To achieve its vision, it works in three key areas. It helps individuals directly into new accommodation through the provision of grants, supports frontline workers in their roles to achieve the best outcomes for those they support, and tests, develops and shares solutions to key issues and build support for them with the public and policymakers.