



Latest News

Working together to end homelessness in Norfolk.

MARCH 2022

NORFOLK STRATEGIC HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

No Homelessness in Norfolk is a project being delivered by the Norfolk Strategic Housing Partnership which is a strong partnership comprising of local authorities, Norfolk County Council, public health, housing associations, health, social care, police, probation, voluntary sector and charities. We are working together to end homelessness in Norfolk.

NORFOLK HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION STRATEGY 2022-2025 ACTION PLAN

The Norfolk Homelessness Prevention Strategy and the Norfolk Homelessness Charter have been endorsed and a focused action plan is now being delivered which seeks to deliver this ambitious strategy. This year the action plan focusses on the following:

1. Norfolk wide homelessness data
2. Access to the private rental market
3. Bridge the gap – supported accommodation and work
4. Mental health and complex needs – discharge protocol
5. EET opportunities for homeless people
6. Young person's mediation scheme
7. Homelessness prevention work and gaps
8. Co-production alliance group with experts

If anyone would like to get involved with any of these task and finish group – please contact the No Homelessness in Norfolk Project Manager – lisaoakley@norwich.gov.uk

UPDATES



SANCTUARY SUPPORTED LIVING

Sanctuary Supported Living have been working in partnership with the Salvation Army and have granted approximately 70 x £50 food vouchers for residents across their schemes in Norfolk, as many of their residents have been hit by the removal of the £20 uplift to benefits.

Sanctuary Supported Living and Your Own Place have partnered to deliver workshops and support to vulnerable people who have faced or experienced homelessness in the county.

[Your Own Place](#) has been awarded grant funding through [Sanctuary's Community Investment Fund](#) to run a series of workshops for staff and residents over an initial six-month period. Your Own Place was selected as a local organisation with expertise in homelessness and engagement.

The need to have a better understanding of what residents want and support them on their pathway to independence, was identified following discussions with managers across the 20 homelessness supported living services in Norfolk. The partnership aims to provide staff with a clearer understanding of the priorities and motivations of residents in relation to meaningful engagement, move-on support and tenancy sustainment. Your Own Place will facilitate highly interactive, fun and engaging group workshops.

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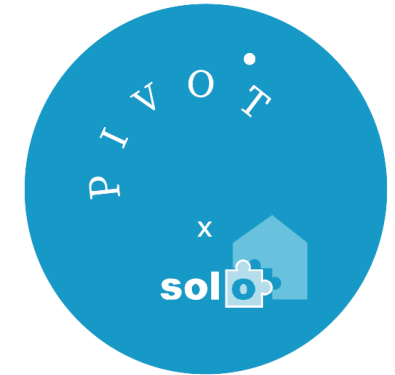
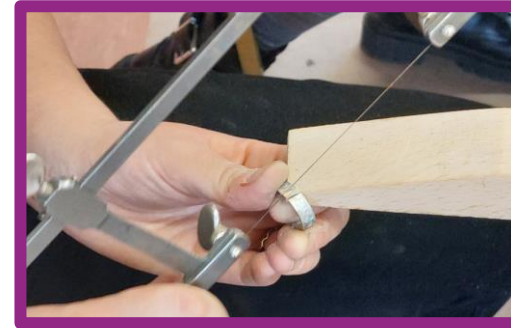
Katie Baker, Local Service Manager, said; “I’m really looking forward to working with the team at Your Own Place to empower our residents to use their voice to shape our services. It will be great to hear from a large number of our residents with their ideas about what they would like to see from us in Sanctuary and these may feed in to local strategies for the future of homeless services in Norfolk.”

Rebecca White CEO, Your Own Place, said: “At Your Own Place we love working with people to ensure not just that their voices are heard, but that their confidence and empowerment grows around influencing the services they receive. We are very excited to be working with Sanctuary Supported Living residents to share needs and wants to ensure they thrive as they move to independence and inter-dependence - all with the aim of preventing homelessness”

Sanctuary is a not-for-profit organisation, and re-invests surpluses into the business and developing sustainable communities through its Community Investment Fund.

Through supported housing, people who have faced or experienced homelessness can build their skills and resilience to break the cycle of repeat homelessness and maintain happy and independent lives.

For more information about Sanctuary Supported Living's homelessness services, see our [homelessness page](#), [mental health page](#), read [residents' stories](#) or [find a service near you](#)



SOLO HOUSING OFFERING SELF-EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED HOMELESSNESS.

Thanks to Saffron Housing Trust’s Community Foundation for their Community Grant, [Solo Housing](#) in partnership with [Make Pivot](#), a social enterprise that trains people experiencing homelessness to become self-employed creative makers [Pivot - Jewellery made by homeless Londoners \(makepivot.org\)](#), launched a bespoke course for people to make, market and sell handcrafted jewellery.

Five people have joined the course being delivered at Saffron’s Taylor Road Community Room and so far, have been learning the different techniques for jewellery making and as a group have designed a bespoke collection.

Over the coming weeks, the group will continue to make the pieces of jewellery for the collection and learn how to market and sell in different settings. All profits from the sales of the pieces will go into providing further training and opportunities for preventing homelessness.

Zoe Webb from Solo Housing said: “The creativity and talent from the participants is immense, we are so excited about showing the final pieces for people to buy.”

Emilie Hildreth, Community Foundation Manager at Saffron, said: “Our Panel were delighted to be able to fund this project. We can see the great value in giving people a chance to learn a skill such as jewellery making, which will help them create a sustainable income by setting up their own enterprise going forward.”

We are in the process of setting up a platform to sell the pieces and looking for a variety of venues to hold a stall to sell the collection from mid-March. If you are interested in becoming involved or would like to purchase pieces of the jewellery, please contact Zoe Webb via [Contact Us – Solo Housing](#)

PARTNERSHIP WORK TO OVERCOME A SYSTEM BARRIER.

Solo Housing received a referral from the National Probation Service to our Women’s Accommodation Service, a project designed to provide safe, sustainable accommodation with support in South Norfolk to women involved in the criminal justice system. Following a strengths-based assessment, Solo was able to offer the woman the next available vacancy.

On release from prison, the woman was placed in an approved premises in Birmingham and at the end of the placement the only available option for travel to the supported accommodation vacancy was through a public transport travel warrant. This created a barrier for this woman as she had no available income to fund her own transport, eleven bags of possessions and a current struggle with anxiety, which is exasperated by travelling on public transport. The initial response was that there was no other funding available for transport.



Solo Housing raised this at the [Norfolk Homelessness Solutions Forum](#) and the [Female Offenders Strategy Group](#) to ask for a partnership approach to overcome this system barrier to homelessness prevention. The response was positive and timely and through some solution focused phone calls facilitated by Solo Housing with proactive members of South Norfolk District Council and Probation, in partnership, they funded a taxi to transport the woman from Birmingham to the vacancy at the Women’s Accommodation Service with Solo Housing.

Three weeks into her new accommodation and this woman is settling into her accommodation and her community.

Special thanks for working together to make this happen to:

- Members of the Norfolk Homelessness Solutions Group
- Victoria Parsons (SNDC)
- Natasha Jackson (SNDC)
- Matt Coman and Darren Ling (Probation)
- Nicola Barnett (Solo Housing)



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The Benjamin Foundation

BENJAMIN FOUNDATION - I needed help and I got it.

Lewis* spent a year sofa surfing after leaving care. He was regularly abusing drugs and alcohol and was at a “very low point” in his life before he came to live at one of The Benjamin Foundation’s accommodation centres in Norfolk for young people.

During his time with us, he has changed his life and is almost ready to take his next steps to independence. We spoke to Lewis, now aged 21 about how things have changed for him over the last two years.

“It was New Year’s Eve 2019 when I moved in. It was really daunting as other people were living here too but I managed to make one good friend really quickly. At that time, I didn’t have much going for me. I’d been sofa surfing, so I didn’t have many possessions. I couldn’t hold onto jobs or maintain relationships; I was partying all the time and I just didn’t believe in myself.

I settled at The Benjamin Foundation really quickly and then obviously Covid hit. Just as I’d started to build some motivation, lockdown made everything harder. There were fewer jobs, and even essential key worker jobs at supermarkets were snapped up really quickly. Lockdown was difficult and I lost my motivation again.

I later started to get some perspective and appreciate the small things – like the opportunity to pop to reception, have a cup of tea and chat with the staff.

I get on really well with the staff. I’ve often chatted to them when I’ve felt down. They have such a positive approach – they help you to see that there *is* something there for you and you can still change your life. They want us to be comfortable but also encourage us to always be doing something like volunteering or education.

They’ve really helped with life skills too – budgeting, washing up - even folding a fitted sheet! They will always help or find ways to make something work for you. The turning point for me was after about a year and I realised that I’m surrounded by positivity here and as long as I try to help myself too I’ll be ok.

In ten years’ time, I think I will honestly look back on this as the best time of my life. There have been so many highlights. Just one was as we were coming out of lockdown, we [staff and residents] all gathered in the courtyard and had a takeaway. It was so amazing to do that after so long. Another time, the staff were pretending to be Charlie’s Angels while they were decorating and wearing jumpsuits! It’s moments like that which have created so many memories and highlights.

The help from the charity’s supporters is also amazing – the people and companies who help us. I’ve now been able to make the best of things and my confidence has increased ten-fold, as has my patience. My self-esteem and mental health have also improved. The key is that I needed help and I got it.

I’ll be moving on soon to a self-contained bedsit. I’m scared in a way as there will be less support but it’s an opportunity to spread my wings, although I won’t miss the midnight curfew!”

Lewis is looking forward to starting seasonal work again when the holiday season begins. He also hopes to give back to The Benjamin Foundation in future.



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The **Benjamin** Foundation

“I’d like to work or volunteer here some time to give back for the help I’ve had. It’s the best thing to ever happen to me.”

Thank you to Lewis for sharing his story.

If you would like to make a donation to support more local young people like Lewis, please visit <https://benjaminfoundation.co.uk/donate/> or contact us on info@benjaminfoundation.co.uk to discuss other ways to get involved to help young people in Norfolk and Suffolk to finally feel hopeful of a better future.

*Name has been changed.

NEXT STEPS

The Norfolk Strategic Housing Partnership is bringing together a Co-Production Alliance Group so if you know of any experts (people with lived experience of homelessness or front-line housing professionals) please let Lisa Oakley know.

Also **A CALL FOR HELP** – any website gurus out there who would be happy to help design a website for the Norfolk Strategic Housing Partnership – please let Lisa Oakley know.

Follow us on twitter: @NSHP2021

If you would like further details or would like to help please contact Lisa:

lisaoakley@norwich.gov.uk

Webpage: <https://www.hopestead.org/norfolk-strategic-housing-partnership/>