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You & emmaus

working together to end homelessness

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Winter 2023

“Emmaus has given me a reason to get up in the morning”

Companion* Sean joined the Emmaus Bristol community a few months ago:

“I recently joined Emmaus Bristol after spending three and a half years at Emmaus Brighton, but I’d first discovered Emmaus back in 2009 when I spent a year at the community in Hampshire. Back then, I was in the process of tracing my biological parents. I had been searching for four years and found nothing. The Emmaus Hampshire interim Community Leader searched and, within three days, found my parents. I moved to Brighton to live with them; then spent 10 years caring for them because they both had severe mental health issues. Eventually, it got to the point that I started to struggle with depression and couldn’t care for them. This led to my self-referral to Emmaus Brighton, where I stayed for over three years.

I’ve settled in well at Emmaus Bristol. I already knew a Companion from Emmaus Brighton here, which helped a great deal. Being in a smaller community than Brighton (which has 57 Companions) made it a lot easier for me to manage my social anxiety. Of the 17 current Companions at Emmaus Bristol, there is no-one I don’t get on with. With my social anxiety, I’m never the one to start a conversation, but it’s been so welcoming here. With another Companion, I answered school children’s questions during a recent visit to Emmaus. That was a big one for me – I would have never done that before! Sir Terry Waite was there too – he’s quite a nice bloke!

I really value the work Emmaus provides. The biggest thing Emmaus has given me is a reason to get up in the morning. With my depression, I could sleep for 16 hours a day and do nothing. At Emmaus, I’ve got a reason to get up in the morning and something to do where at the end of the day, I think, ‘do you know what? I’ve done something instead of wasting a day’.

I prefer the customer-facing roles like working in the shops and going out on the van to collect furniture. I had done retail work before, but I’ve still learnt so much more, and Emmaus offers loads of training too: I’ve done my Warehouse and Storage Level 3, Customer Service Level 3, First Aid at Work Level 3, and Fire Warden training – I’ve done quite a bit! I hope to start a college course in coding, that’s what’s needed nowadays. Emmaus Bristol’s support team is helping to get that moving for me.”

To find out more about our work and how we support Companions, visit www.emmausbristol.org.uk/live-with-us/become-a-companion

Meet Katie



Packaging up sold items
ready to post in our Stokes
Croft warehouse

Katie our new Online & Retail Assistant joined Emmaus Bristol in January 2023.

“I work in the eBay office supporting Julian, the Online & Retail Manager. My role is to get more listings on eBay so we can get items sold, packaged up and safely distributed to customers.

Everyone at Emmaus Bristol is so friendly, helpful and approachable. I feel like I can ask anyone if I have a question or if I’m struggling with something, which made a huge difference when I started the role.

I wanted to work at Emmaus Bristol for two reasons: the eBay side of my role ties in so well with my past experience – I’ve bought items from charity shops all my life, and I loved the idea of working for a charity. I didn’t know anything about Emmaus before applying, but quickly discovered the very important and worthwhile work that is done here. It feels good to be part of it.

My favourite thing about working at Emmaus Bristol is the people: it’s truly somewhere that makes a difference in people’s lives, and everyone here very much believes in the work we do. We’re all aiming for the same goal and working together to achieve it, which is very motivating for everyone involved.”

**To shop with us and support our homelessness charity without
leaving your home, visit www.ebay.co.uk/str/emmausbristol**

Inspirational visit from Citizenship 4 Life and Sir Terry Waite

Our community had the pleasure of hosting an extraordinary group of young people as we welcomed 32 visitors from Citizenship 4 Life (C4L) along with Sir Terry Waite – Emmaus UK President and C4L Patron.

C4L is a year-long educational journey that equips 13–15 year olds from Cornwall with essential life skills, opportunities and inspiration for becoming responsible, compassionate citizens. The group spent three days in Bristol, visiting various organisations including our charity.

We welcomed the visitors with a presentation that introduced our mission and the work we do to support people out of homelessness. Two Companions, Pawel and Sean, answered their questions and shared personal experiences. Sir Terry also shared his incredible journey and the wisdom he gained from five years as a hostage in Lebanon.

Our visitors enjoyed our eBay item quiz followed by free time in our shop, where the group picked up some second-hand bargains and experienced first hand the impact their purchases have on our charity and mission. We were thrilled to receive an email from Rose, the C4L Project Coordinator, after the visit expressing her gratitude:

“I wanted to write to thank you on behalf of everyone at Citizenship 4 Life for your warm welcome, your time and the energy you put into hosting our group. You truly went above and beyond! We learnt so much from you, you have genuinely influenced our participants to think more deeply about their actions and become better citizens. It was great to see our participants spend in the shop too – we hope it gave you a bumper day!”



Inspirational Sir Terry Waite talks to a C4L participant

Emmaus Bristol adopts trauma-informed approach

Emmaus Bristol is working towards becoming a trauma-informed organisation. This means we find ways to support people without re-triggering previous or ongoing trauma that they are experiencing.

Being trauma-informed allows us to be curious, rather than judgemental. It will change the way we work – including policies, procedures and more – so that we use written and spoken language that works *with* companions and rather than *for* companions. The approach engenders safety, trust, collaboration, harm reduction, choice, being strengths-based, and aiming towards self-empowerment.

“Trauma is any event or duration of an experience that prevents us from developing and coping in the present.”

Trauma can be the result of so many things: an incident, accident, childhood experience, ongoing prejudice, war, racism, violence, homophobia, exclusion, bullying, ridicule and so much more. Sadly, 75% of people who have experienced homelessness have also experienced trauma. For those with dependencies this rises to 85%.

Trauma can both lead to homelessness and be a result of homelessness. It is crucial for Emmaus Bristol to promote a culture of compassion and understanding for those who have experienced trauma and are struggling with its effects.

Some people may experience post-traumatic stress disorder and for others, it may be withdrawal from society, mental health symptoms or dependencies they have used to cope with the pain and memories.

Instead of seeing trauma-induced behaviours as an individual’s ‘chosen path’ we can start to understand where these behaviours may have originated. Studies show that for every negative childhood experience, substance use increases later in life, and conversely for every positive in a child’s life, the risks are reduced.

This may sound simplistic but being trauma-informed works. It may not ‘cure’ a person from trauma, but it allows an individual to experience ‘unconditional positive regard’; a starting point of respect; a safe space to regather strength and well-being.

So far, Emmaus Bristol staff have undertaken training and this will be extended to the Companion team, volunteers and trustees.

“Most importantly, this is not a quick fix. There will be self-reflection and bags of humility, as we nudge our way forward to a better way of living and working”.

Emmaus Bristol secures spot on digital marketing programme

We are thrilled to announce that Emmaus Bristol has been selected as this year's recipient for the esteemed 'Noble Deeds' programme.

Emmaus Bristol will receive a comprehensive £18,000 digital marketing support package from Bristol-based agency Noble Performs over six months. Working with the Noble Performs team, we can shape our digital marketing efforts to reach more supporters, boost donations, create new revenue streams and, ultimately, better serve our Companions.

Like many charities right now, it's a challenge to fund our activities and reach potential supporters. We are looking forward to drawing on digital communications expertise to help us create targeted, impactful messaging.

Competition for the Noble Deeds programme within the local charity sector was strong this year. We're proud to have been selected, based on the long-term impact we have on the community in supporting people out of poverty and homelessness. Lorenzo Campbell, Noble Performs Chair of UK Deeds committee, spoke highly of our efforts when giving us the good news:

"We love what Emmaus is doing in terms of how it equips people with the skills and experiences they need to build life beyond being a Companion. In turn, creating a continuous pathway for those facing homelessness and poverty to get back on their feet and create a way forward for themselves."



Xanne with Noble Performs digital team

£3,525 raised so far

for our Repairs & Energy Appeal (but a long way to go!)

In our last newsletter, we launched our **Repairs & Energy Appeal** and are delighted that £3,525 has been raised so far – thank you! Your generosity has already made a significant difference in our meeting the costs of maintaining our 21-bedroom community house for the comfort and well-being of Companions.



Adrian
at home

Our **Repairs & Energy Appeal** hopes to raise the funds necessary to address pressing issues such as plumbing, electrical work, weather proofing, and general upkeep. As for everyone, costs have increased significantly over the past year. An additional £41,993 is needed for repairs, maintenance, lighting, heating, water and sewerage – all crucial to providing a safe and secure home for Companions. **We cannot do it without your help – and no contribution is too small.** Your donations will help us continue to provide a safe, well-maintained environment for Companions.

How your contributions can impact the lives of our Companions:

- £1,000 could provide repairs, maintenance, and utilities affecting one person for an entire year.
- £120 could provide light and heat to all 21 Companions for one day.
- £60 could cover repairs and maintenance affecting all 21 residents for one day.
- £20 could provide four hours of light and heat to all 21 individuals.
- £10 could cover the repairs, maintenance, and utilities cost of one room for a day.

Please consider making a donation to our Repairs & Energy Appeal today at www.justgiving.com/campaign/repairs.



Community members with the recently installed water purifying system

Mission accomplished!

Water purifier installed at Florence Home Foundation

Last year, our team undertook health and fitness challenges to raise money for the Florence Home Foundation in Tamil Nadu, India. Thanks to the hard work of the Emmaus Bristol team, and our generous supporters, a water purifier has now been installed!

Our mission was to raise £2,350 to provide clean drinking water at the Killai Centre. The centre provides essential support to 75 orphaned children, 25 destitute women, and 200 local families.

We were delighted to receive photos of the completed water purifier and are so glad that we were able to help. A huge thank you to everyone who supported this cause. Your contributions helped a community have something we often take for granted.



www.emmausbristol.org.uk

Stokes Croft shop and office: Backfields House, Upper York Street, Bristol BS2 8QJ

Bedminster shop: 72 Bedminster Parade, Bristol BS3 4HL

Sparks Bristol: 78 Broadmead, Bristol BS1 3DS

Online shop: www.ebay.co.uk/str/emmausbristol or, on eBay mobile app, search for "seller: emmausbristol"

Emmaus Bristol is a charity registered in England and Wales: 1071538 and a registered limited company: 03579001

working together to end homelessness