

You & emmaus

working together to end homelessness

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Winter 2025

News and updates from the Emmaus Bristol community



Cover story: Emmaus gives people a second chance

Cassidy, a companion* shares her story



Winner!
Cassidy playing
darts with
companions at
our community home

I've got a new flat, so I'll be moving out of the Emmaus community soon. I'll be sad to go because Emmaus has been brilliant to me. They've been really cool.

I was excited when I found out about the new flat because it gives me the chance to live independently again. I spent most of my younger life in hostels or care, but my older life has been spent in flats, moving around. So, it will be good to get my own flat again, get my own space, do my own thing, get back to work full-time and just have a home again, because that's what I miss. Even though it's nice here and really cool it can be a bit strenuous with everyone living here.

* formerly homeless members of our community

A day in the life

So, I get up about seven because we work every day, so I get ready for work, whether I'm in the shop, warehouse, van or anything like that.

It's about a 20–25 minute walk to work, so I go on my bike now as it's much quicker.

I like everything about my job really, just keeping busy – I need to keep my mind busy and myself busy, so I don't mind learning new stuff.

I've painted the community kitchen and the doors, and I've now started decorating the living room. I've started taping up and cleaning before I start painting.

I love working with customers because it's something I've always done, I've worked in hotels, I've done VIPs and silver service. I love working in the shop, you get all the banter, and we have a laugh and cheer people up – that's a good day for me.

When I finish work, I ride my bike back home. Normally, I have tea if it's done, grab a cup of tea, go upstairs, relax and watch a bit of telly. I go on my phone for a bit, play my favourite game and before you know it, it's bedtime and back to work.

I like it at Emmaus

The support I get is really good. I have brilliant support workers who are always there when I need them. They're really good people.

I like it here. When I first came here, I was in a bit of a mess, but I seem to have really come out and back to my old self, which is pretty good. I've got a decent room which is full of my stuff.

My best day at Emmaus is when everyone's happy – so it depends what way you wake up. I like the day-to-day routine.

"Emmaus gives people a second chance. It shows them that not everyone is going to give up on them; there are people here that care."

You've got to change your attitude if you want to make it work. You can't always rely on the support, but it does help you because once you've got a roof over your head and you've got support, you can build on it.

I was homeless and it's so difficult to get things done when you're homeless because you're always freezing cold or you're worried about where you're going to eat. Here you've got a roof over your head and food in your stomach. It's warm and that makes a massive difference for you to be able to do other things you want to do.

I've been working on my CV and interview skills and I'm looking forward to moving on.



Cassidy
checking
our e-bike
delivery
schedule

Meet Roger – our art specialist volunteer



Roger first started volunteering with Emmaus Bristol in March 2025. He dedicates one day a week to our community, helping to process art donations that are kindly donated by local artists or that come through our house clearance service.

Roger has carefully collated a selection of beautiful pieces ahead of our first art auction fundraiser, held this December on eBay! All proceeds from the auction will go towards supporting Emmaus and helping to end homelessness here in Bristol and elsewhere. Every £1 spent will go towards a good cause. Search for 'emmausbristol' on eBay to check out the art pieces and place your bid.

Why do you volunteer at Emmaus?

I saw an opportunity online to volunteer here and help with the warehouse and sorting the pictures that come in from house clearances, it sounded interesting to me!

I think, like many people, I feel pretty bad about homelessness. I can't understand why we have a society that can't offer more to people who are clearly in some level of need. Sleeping on the streets or having other disadvantages is something we all ought to address as a community.

Many of our needs are addressed at a much higher level: we have an NHS, and a council that supports a lot of our needs, so why can't we help those people who really are in some form of difficulty by sleeping on the streets?

What different kinds of work do companions get involved with at Emmaus Bristol?

There's great variety. I work alongside companions who are repairing, preparing and fixing things. I help those who are trying to sort out pictures and frames, and others who are selling pieces of furniture.

There's quite a range to it and Emmaus is making a resource out of things that people might not think would make a useful contribution. Things donated and sold here are very usefully going towards supporting people who are homeless.

What is Emmaus Bristol's impact on the wider community of Bristol?

I think it has a very positive impact. It's very helpful to support those companions who are here, in terms of their homelessness and their immediate needs. I think it gives an opportunity for others to help as well.

You can help by donating, by coming and buying lots of different things from our shops, or help as a volunteer. So, it's a mutual arrangement with the people of Bristol and those people who are perhaps in greater need than many who live here.

What do you find special about Emmaus?

I think there's a good sense that everybody works together and that volunteers, staff and companions all work as a team. You don't really distinguish between people, you just try to get a group of people together that are helpful for whatever the task is, and that's a really nice working atmosphere.

What connects art and homelessness?

Art is important as a process and as a product. Doing something artistic is a really valuable thing to do and the final product can give a lot of people joy, interest or surprise. It's a creative process and that is extremely helpful to people in any situation.

Tell us more about your art background

I trained in painting and drawing in a very traditional way as an art student and then as a postgraduate student at the Royal Academy Schools. I then taught in lots of different art colleges and ended up managing colleges and a big chunk of the University of West of England. I guess I went from a practitioner to a manager, but I still keep the flame alive – I paint and draw myself and still enjoy teaching painting and drawing.

Do you have any favourite pieces in the auction?

There's a lot of variety in the pictures that are donated here. I can't really name a favourite because there are so many and they are all very interesting. There's a great range of techniques and approaches: I've seen lino cuts, wood cuts, oil paintings and drawings. There's a lot of variety and people are welcome to come to have a look round and see what takes their fancy. Roger said:

"I would like to say thank you very much to all the artists who have donated work. I would like to reassure them that it's going to a good cause and will give a lot of pleasure to people who purchase from the auction."

Meet our Fundraising Star, Jo!

Jo rediscovered her love of running in her 70s — and she's using it to make a difference!



Jo powering forward during a race at Frampton Mansell

Since completing her first 10K for Emmaus Bristol in April 2025, Jo's already run two official races, beaten her original time by over 10 minutes, and raised more than £1,000.

We caught up with Jo to find out a little more about why she chose to raise vital funds for Emmaus Bristol:

"When deciding which charity to run for, I wanted one that truly makes a difference locally. One Sunday, a leaflet about Emmaus fell out of my newspaper — it felt like a sign! Supporting a charity that combines care for people with care for the planet feels just right, especially in times like these."

Thank you for choosing to fundraise for us Jo, we are so grateful!

If you're feeling inspired by Jo and want to take on your own active challenge in aid of Emmaus Bristol, here's what to do:

1. Choose your challenge – we recommend taking a look at www.runningcalendar.co.uk, this shows a full list of races, fun runs and walks throughout the UK.
2. Set up your fundraising page – the easiest way to collect donations is through an online fundraising page on www.justgiving.com. Reach out to our fundraising team if you need support setting up your page, contact Harry at harry@emmausbristol.org.uk



Emmaus Bristol offers people affected by homelessness much more than a roof. It provides a safe home, meaningful work experience and tailored support. Please consider making a donation at www.emmausbristol.org.uk

New Barbour jackets given to Emmaus companions

We're very grateful to fashion retailer Barbour for its kind donation of brand-new clothing to Emmaus Bristol. The iconic countryside fashion brand joined forces with responsible business network, Business in the Community, to donate its excess stock to a charity in Bristol. Emmaus Bristol immediately came to mind, and we were delighted to receive 25 boxes of brand-new Barbour clothing! A big thank you to Barbour and Business in the Community from all of us here at Emmaus Bristol.

Companions at Emmaus Bristol, now rocking their new Barbour jackets, share their thoughts:



"We've never been offered anything like this before, it's nice to be thought of."

"It's made me feel posh and sophisticated."

"Lots of it will be good for interviews and it's good to have a decent waterproof that will last a while."

"It's nice to have real quality stuff, thank you so much, it's a nice feeling!"

"I would never be able to afford this usually so it's nice to get access to something so high end and good quality. I like having something new instead of second hand."

The remaining jackets were sold in our Bedminster Parade store and online eBay shop, helping to raise vital donations so we can continue to support people experiencing homelessness.

Pop into our shops and see what treasures you can find! Our charity shops in Bedminster and Stokes Croft are open Monday, Wednesday to Saturday 10am–16.30pm and Tuesdays 11am–16.30pm.



Throughout the twelve days of Christmas and all year round, Emmaus Bristol provides more than a roof to people experiencing homelessness, poverty and social exclusion.

Every financial donation we receive, no matter how big or small, makes a difference. Please consider a monthly donation to Emmaus Bristol and give the gift of more than a roof, but a chance to develop new skills and a sense of belonging, all year round.

Visit our website – www.emmausbristol.org.uk – and click the donate button in the top right corner to make your donation today.

Your financial contributions have made a real difference this year and they will continue to do so. On behalf of all the staff, volunteers and companions who call Emmaus Bristol home, **THANK YOU!**



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

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



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