



Caring Hands  
in the community

# NEWSLETTER



Christmas 2019

**Our Day Centre is well known for helping rough sleepers, but there are many more who are living in vulnerable circumstances, and who find help at Caring Hands:**

*Ella* is a young woman who was moved to Medway with her two-year-old toddler on a Witness Protection Scheme, due to an abuse case in which she was one of the victims, and which led to widespread family breakdown. However, she knew no one here, and didn't feel safe at the hostel she was placed in. People banged on her door constantly and she worried they would break into her room and steal things while she was out. 'Coming to Caring Hands is such a relief. I've made friends here and can feel safe during the day at least. I don't feel so alone any more,' she told us.

Ella has now been rehoused happily in Essex, but came back to visit to say thank you for the support Caring Hands gave at a time she felt most vulnerable and in need.

*John* has learning disabilities and cuts himself when stressed. His family were pressuring him to give them his benefit money, and he was very unhappy, fresh scars on his wrists. Coming to Caring Hands gave him the confidence to say no to his family, and we helped him join a local support group where he can socialise with others in similar situations, and learn coping mechanisms.

### **Caring Hands – a hand up, not just a hand out**

If you would like to show your support for people struggling with homelessness and difficult living situations this Christmas, please make a donation [HERE](#).

Just £2 will buy one person coffee every day for a week. £5 will buy warm gloves and socks. £30 will buy an all-weather sleeping bag.

### **Deprivation in Medway**

Our area of Chatham is officially the fourth most deprived area in Kent, according to the latest government statistics (Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2019, ONS). Whilst income is up on last time, the area has dropped lower in the rankings for every other domain: employment, education, health, crime, barriers to housing and services and living environment. But we are not downhearted!

### **The kindness of strangers**

We are often touched by people who ring up or drop in with donations of clothes, sleeping bags, rucksacks or food, many of whom won't even leave a name or address for us to send them a thank you letter. To all of you, wherever you are, you do not know how much this is appreciated. Thank YOU!

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## Donor differences

What has happened at Caring Hands in 2019 thanks to our generous donors:

- New fast cooker for heating lots of lunches at once to help with the lunchtime demand
- The re-stocking of our tins and dried goods thanks to Harvest donations from 43 local schools – this will provide breakfasts and basic goods right up until October 2020!
- A new shower and toilets



Before



After



Before



After



### The benefits are:

- A clean, smart new area that is a pleasure to use and makes our guests feel valued
- The Broken Windows theory of criminology states that visible signs of anti-social behaviour encourages more of the same – we have been able to mend the broken walls and holes in the door and create an atmosphere of order that will encourage better behaviours
- Blue lighting throughout this zone ensures that despite privacy, drug abuse is not possible (guests can't see their veins to inject), whilst removal of any hard surfaces on which to cut drugs (cisterns, toilet lids) also prevents abuse and makes the area feel safer for others
- Underfloor heating in the shower area improves the comfort factor for users, especially in winter, but importantly it eradicates mould growth on walls and ceiling as it dries out this heavily used and steamy area
- Improved drainage design ensures the shower is now a proper functioning wet-room
- Removing the tiling in the wet-room means no bacteria-harboring grouting – the plastic-coated walls can be cleaned and hosed down with ease so the whole area remains healthier – which is important to improve the health of people particularly vulnerable to pulmonary infections due to their lifestyle

Huge thanks to those whose generosity made this possible:

**Kent Community Foundation** (Petteridge Fund, Land Securities Fund, and Brissenden Fund), **Screwfix Foundation**, **Kreston Reeves**, **Fundraisers from The King's Church Chatham** who undertook fundraising events, **ThermoSphere** for supplying underfloor heating free of charge, and **MAP Solutions** for providing cost price sanitary-ware, and our loyal army of volunteers who wielded paintbrushes, made teas, coffees, loaded washing machines, cooked meals or did mountains of washing up throughout the year. We couldn't do it without you!

**Merry Christmas from all at Caring Hands in the Community!**