



Autumn Newsletter 2025

Inside see the difference that your support is making to people's lives. And hear from our specially-trained Teams on how they support people to find a way out of homelessness and help transform their lives.

The Passage 

Everyone deserves a place to call home

“I have been in survival mode, but now my life is starting”

The team at Newman Street provides an essential support service to residents in temporary accommodation. Their aim is to transform the lives of people in need.

Newman Street helped give Bianca* her life back. On being welcomed here, she struggled to hold a conversation. Suffering from extreme trauma due to her abusive father, life was a whirlwind of depression, anxiety and debilitating brain-fog. “Even if a pin dropped, I would start crying. I had a job but due to my complex family situation it led me to becoming homeless, and finding support from The Passage at Newman Street,” she recalls. Slowly over time and under close guidance from the Newman Street staff, Bianca began to recover some sense of herself. Conversations became possible, even rewarding. She was able to develop relationships, first with staff, and then

with estranged members of her family. “With specialist support and therapy, I’m now much better,” she says. “The relationship with my family has improved, and I speak to my mum too.”

Two years since walking through the doors at Newman Street, referred by Westminster City Council as a person of considerable vulnerability, her life has been transformed. The week that we speak to her, she will receive the keys to her own accommodation. Her ambition now is to return to her profession in media production. “I am just so excited for the next stage in my life,” she says.

For Afeez, Service Manager at Newman Street, it’s been a privilege to watch her progression. “I am so proud of

Right: Service Manager Afeez meeting a resident of Newman St.



her, how she’s worked with us, and now she’s going onto the next stage. We will be here for her if she needs any support.”

Newman Street serves as a haven, a safe space, and a precious source of hope. It’s 79 self-contained studio flats provide temporary accommodation to people,

like Bianca, who have applied to the council for a solution to end their homelessness.

Afeez and his staff provide dedicated support to all the residents, overseeing housing support and linking them into services best placed to support their immediate needs during their stay which can last up to 24 months.

“I joined the homelessness sector in 2020. I grew up on a socially deprived estate in South London and experienced the challenges that come with homelessness at a young age. I wanted to give back and support vulnerable communities.”

Afeez, Newman Street Service Manager

“My faith, and a desire to help people in a meaningful way, drew me to The Passage”

For Julie, a health volunteer in the Resource Centre, The Passage is a calling. “Even if it’s just a chat and a smile,” she aims to make a difference to people’s lives at a time when they are facing many challenges

Julie first heard about The Passage through her church. Sensing that the charity’s values would align with hers, and keen to work with people again after Covid disrupted her home-based osteopathy practice, she took up a role as a health volunteer in the Resource Centre.

Every Wednesday morning she attends the centre at The Passage, helping to support the Doctor Hickey Surgery – a weekly GP practice dedicated to supporting the health needs of people facing a homelessness crisis.

Julie is on hand to offer assistance and guidance. With the practice running a drop-in clinic – there are two treatment rooms



located inside the centre – she manages clients’ medical concerns, acquiring information to pass on to the GPs working on-site.

Among her key responsibilities is helping people to register with

Above:
Julie, a health
volunteer at
The Passage.

the practice. “People who are homeless can find it very challenging to access healthcare services,” she explains. “There are many people who are displaced from where they used to live for whom Doctor Hickey’s surgery is a welcome presence.”

“There are certain medical conditions that our doctors see a lot,” Julie says. “Skin infections are common, as are foot infections and sores, as shoes are often ill-fitting or inadequate.”

The nature of sleeping outside, she adds, inevitably makes people more susceptible to common infections and musculoskeletal aches and pain. “And of course, the homeless population also suffer from all the conditions that the rest of the population suffer from. The doctors are able to ensure their patients get the medical care they need.”

Everyone’s story is unique, she says. Some people have suffered a complex range of setbacks, from relationship breakdowns to family bereavements, to job losses, substance abuse, and

mental and physical illness. To everyone who wants to talk, Julie offers a listening ear. “It’s a blessing that The Passage is there to help everyone who comes here.”



Doctor Hickey’s Surgery: A History

The service was founded in 1987 as the personal mission of Dr. Mary Hickey, a religious sister and trained doctor. After returning from Zambia to her London convent and spending some time wandering around Westminster, she was struck by the alarming volume of people facing a homelessness crisis unable to access the health services they needed. With a borrowed office, prescription pad and basic furniture, she began to see patients. Soon after speaking to the Archbishop of Westminster, she was granted a proper premises, and the surgery has provided a service ever since. Even today, almost four decades after the surgery’s inception, Dr Hickey still comes into The Passage from time to time to drop off donations.

Humanely and with compassion, our Housing Solutions Service is helping to bridge the gap between the person and the system

The Housing Solutions Service team is a multidisciplinary team made up of welfare advisers, domestic abuse specialists and substance misuse and mental health workers. Andrew, explains how he and his team assists clients to navigate the homelessness system.

I first started in 2014 as a volunteer in Passage House, leading an art group. Two years later I got my first paid role as a Resettlement Worker in the Resource Centre. Meeting such a wide variety of people really demonstrated to me the misconceptions other people have about homelessness.

In 2018, I started working for the new Housing Solutions Service [HSS]. The concept is to provide additional support to single homeless people who

had approached Westminster for homelessness assistance.

The homelessness system is difficult to navigate. People are put through a complex legal process with set parameters and timelines. This is why the role we do – providing a holistic understanding to help bridge that gap between person and system – is so important.

Facing homelessness and being made homeless is a traumatic experience. This is where the support we provide

Top right:
Andrew
-Enhanced
Resettlement
Worker

is so valuable. Our clients who are rough sleeping can access the Resource Centre. They can also be referred to other services within The Passage such as the the Tracks Employment Team. We have flexibility in our role which allows us to visit our clients in their temporary accommodation and offer our support.

I have really noticed the difference that The Passage's involvement has made for the people approaching Westminster for assistance. I don't know of another local authority that offers such a comprehensive package for its vulnerable service users.



“Whilst the overall aim is to try and help people find accommodation, having the opportunity to offer a person experiencing homelessness hot food and a shower – and treating them with compassion is invaluable. In my experience there are so many misconceptions about homelessness.”

Andrew, Enhanced Resettlement Worker

Philippe is a member of our Lived Experience Assembly and shares his experience of homelessness.

As a member of our Lived Experience Assembly (LEA), Philippe has come full circle, helping to shape The Passage's services, policies, and strategies for people who are facing a homelessness crisis. He tells his story here.

The role of the LEA is to use our own lived experience of homelessness to help improve the services people are offered at The Passage. When in my late fifties I found myself without a roof above my head and no money to speak of, I ended up in a situation that I had no experience of. Formerly a company director, having lost both my income and my home, now firmly on the receiving end, and grateful for any help that would come my way, I had to rely on friends and whatever Universal Credit would give me to make ends meet. The learning curve was stiff and I had to learn a lot, quickly. It

all started at the job centre where in order to get some financial help I needed to have an address. A good soul there advised me to contact The Passage and that little piece of advice changed my life. I remember my first visit and how awkward I felt. I was still in that frame of mind thinking that I should not be there, but I was and I needed help. The Passage provided what I needed most at the time, an address and the assurance of a daily meal. Thanks to this and the support of some very good friends I was spared the worst. I never had to beg for food and never had to sleep



rough. Looking around I am very aware of how lucky I have been.

That very first day at The Passage I was able to talk about specifics of my situation. I did not just receive valuable and practical advice. I felt that I was heard. And it felt good. We are many in need and resources are scarce. It can take a long time, but one must never lose hope. I am now in accommodation starting my new life. I am 61 I have my own place and I will soon be in business again. I am proud to be part of the LEA and to have the opportunity to give something back.

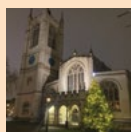
“This is my story and I have learned that there is no shame in asking for help. Homelessness can happen to anyone for many different reasons. It is one of those things that you think will never happen to you. But sometimes it does.”

Philippe, former Passage client and Lived Experience Assembly Member

Events Calendar

Christmas Carol Service

Thursday 11th December,
St Margaret's Church,
Westminster Abbey

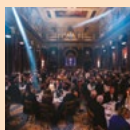


Join us as we sing your favourite Christmas classics with the fantastic St Margaret's Choir, and light a candle to celebrate the start of the festive season.

passage.org.uk/christmas-carol-service/

A Little Night Music

Wednesday 18th March 2026,
One Great George Street



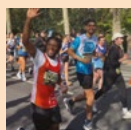
Enjoy beautiful live music and a three-course dinner in One Great

George Street's stunning Grade II listed, glass-domed Edwardian venue in the heart of Westminster.

passage.org.uk/a-little-night-music/

London Landmarks Half Marathon

Sunday 12th April 2026



Join #TeamPassage to take part in the only half marathon to go through the City of London and City of Westminster. Hurry - this popular event has sold out for the past 3 years!

passage.org.uk/london-landmarks-half-marathon/

Yr Wydffa (Snowdon) Sunrise Hike

Saturday 13th June 2026,
Llanberis Wales



Embark on the Snowdon Sunrise Hike and witness the breathtaking dawn over Wales' highest peak - an unforgettable adventure above the clouds!

passage.org.uk/snowdon-sunrise-hike

Why not choose Cathedral View for your next event or meeting?

Cathedral View offers bright, modern and flexible venue spaces in the heart of Victoria with lovely views over Westminster Cathedral. With various room configurations and capacities, and a delicious catering menu, it is a fantastic location to host any event, be it a conference, a drinks reception, a team meeting or a dazzling party.

The most important benefit to choosing Cathedral View is that all proceeds go directly to The Passage; supporting our work towards a society where homelessness no longer exists, and everyone has a place to call home.



Cathedral View 

Supporting the work of The Passage

For more information please visit our website or contact
Venue@Passage.org.uk
cathedralview.org.uk



Everyone deserves a place to call home

Join our online community



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passage.org.uk

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Email: fundraising@passage.org.uk

Royal Patron – HRH Prince of Wales,
Founding Patron – Cardinal Basil Hume,
Patron – Cardinal Vincent Nichols.

Registered Charity Number 1079764



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