

Centre Life

2024 Edition

EXPLORING THE HOUSING CRISIS

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WHAT'S COMING UP

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Welcome



Welcome to the Cardinal Hume Centre's magazine.

In here, you can read how the Centre helps young people and families experiencing poverty and homelessness.

This year the number of families and children who are homeless hit record levels. Recent figures suggest at least 85,000 London children are homeless and living in temporary accommodation. Child poverty rates are also at a record high.

The Cardinal Hume Centre is one of the few places those families can ask for support. Demand for many of our services is outstripping our supply. Too often we are helping families who do not know where their children will sleep that night. Too many parents we help are forced to bring up their children in hotels. You can read more about the housing crisis and how the Centre is helping families impacted by it on pages 8 and 9.

The Centre starts with a simple belief. Each person matters. Yet the consequence of this belief is clear, it means each person should have the chance to live a life free from poverty, each person should have a safe home. This is what drives the work you support.

Through your generous help the Centre helped over 1300 people last year. In this magazine you will read just a small number of their stories. I hope it shows the difference you make. We are forever grateful for your kindness and care.

With huge thanks,

George O'Neill

George O'Neill
Chief Executive Officer
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Front cover:
Children playing
at our Family Centre.

Anjali's story

Anjali fled her home country to seek asylum in the UK and currently lives with her son in a hotel for asylum seekers. She uses our family centre to make food and as a safe space where her son can play and learn.

Anjali has been coming to the Cardinal Hume Centre since 2021.

Born in Sri Lanka, she was forced to flee her country because of the political violence and seek asylum in the United Kingdom. She explains: "I needed to come here to save my life. I was brought to the UK by an agent who stole everything – he took my passport, money and abandoned me. Fortunately, a family friend let me stay in their home and gave me a bed and food. Because I did not have anything."

In 2021, Anjali gave birth to a boy, but this happiness did not last when her partner and father of her son abandoned her. She says, "he never paid for food, clothes, nothing" and she was left to do everything by herself.

Destitute, Anjali reached out for help and now lives in a hotel for asylum seekers with her son. She lives in a basement room with no kitchen and finds it incredibly difficult. Anjali explains: "We do not have anywhere to cook, or even a fridge or microwave. I am suffering from depression, and I really worry about my son's development. I see other children who live in houses, and he is growing up in a hotel – it is very different."

She was referred to the Cardinal Hume Centre by her social worker.

Anjali reveals: "The staff have helped me a lot, especially when I got my documents and needed to claim Universal Credit. Now they're helping me with my housing situation with the Council. They will always push to help with anything as much as they can."

The Centre is also helping Anjali to buy food. She explains: "They have helped us to get food when we had no money and gave me

an Oyster Card so that I am not stuck in the hotel all the time. Now I can do things by myself without fear."

The hotel Anjali and her son live in has no outdoor space, so they love the garden here at the centre. She excitedly says, "Even if we come and it is raining, my son just wants to go outside and play because he never can at ours."

She continues: "Even though I have been moved to a hotel further away, I still want to come here. My son loves coming to the Cardinal Hume Centre and I feel more comfortable here than anywhere else. This is the best place because when I am here, I feel that people are treated equally and that this is my country."



Gardening activities in our Family Centre.

We are the Lord Mayor of Westminster’s chosen charity

Cllr Robert Rigby was elected as Right Worshipful Lord Mayor of Westminster in May. We are thrilled that he chose the Cardinal Hume Centre to be one of his beneficiary charities for 2024/25.

Through his Mayoral year, we hope to increase awareness of the issues facing young people and their families in Westminster. Particularly, the rising numbers of children living in poor-quality temporary accommodation as a direct result of the national housing crisis. With 25% of Westminster’s children living in poverty, the Centre is trying to break the cycle, by providing support with everything from housing and welfare advice to immigration advice to employment opportunities.

The Lord Mayor is a practising Catholic who was educated at Ampleforth College, where our founder Cardinal Basil Hume was Abbot before being ordained as Cardinal. Robert Rigby explains: “Catholicism plays a big part in my life, and I try everyday to lead a life which reflect those values. My education at Ampleforth instilled within me the need to put others first and recognise the two pillars of the rule of St Benedict’s teaching namely ‘listen’ and ‘humility’. It is the guide rail to how I have done my job as a local councillor and how I will act as Lord Mayor.”

Robert is also a keen runner and regularly runs 10k and cross-county races as a member of the Shaftesbury Barnet Harriers. He has committed to running the Royal Parks Half Marathon on Sunday 13th October, and help raise vital funds for our work.

If you’d like to support the Lord Mayor’s fundraising and pledge a gift, visit Robert’s Just Giving page by using the URL address below.

<https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/lord-mayor-cardinal-hume-centre>



Cllr Rigby attended our Anniversary Mass on 18th June 2024, with Mark Hoban, (Chair), Rachel Case and George O'Neill.

Madani’s story

Madani has been living in our accommodation for a year, after arriving in the UK as a political refugee.

Madani is 21 years old and has been living in the Cardinal Hume Centre for just over a year. He is originally from Chad but had to leave his country at just 14 years old due to political issues. He says, ‘It was not safe for me to stay there so I had to flee and try to find a better life.’

He continues: “I was told about the Centre by my social worker who helped me to get a place here. When I arrived, I felt like I was safe - really happy! I really like the diversity here. It is good to meet new people, speak with people from around the world and keep practicing my English.”

Carla from our Employment and Learning team helped him look for work. He says “I really wanted to get a job, but I needed help to write my application and practice for interview questions. She [Carla] has helped me in every way she can to make sure that I am ready. I went to sessions for my interview techniques, and it was so helpful.”

He continues: “She also gave me a voucher, so that I could buy myself a suit to wear to my interview. I felt really smart and confident wearing it, and when I turned up for my interview, they said I looked professional and ready for the job - that felt really good to hear. I was nervous to do the interview because it was the first one in my life and I was anxious about speaking English too. But it went really well, and I got the job!” The experience has boosted Mandani’s confidence because he says he feels ‘more prepared and less nervous’ when looking for work in the future.



Madani pictured wearing the suit that he bought for his interview.

Madani’s told us he’s completed his training for his new job and will start soon. He said “I am looking forward to being able to meet new people and speak in English with the customers. It’s really good for me.”

He is very hopeful for the future and says “I want to keep practicing my English, get my own flat and do things like work, pay my taxes and bills. I want to feel like I am part of real life. Step by step, things are getting better, and my life has changed so much.”

His Personal Advisor, Florence, from Westminster Leaving Care Service, commented on his time at the Centre:

“Madani has been working with the Cardinal Hume Employment team and has achieved so much since! I have seen his confidence increase and his outlook on life improve.

I am so proud of all the amazing things that Madani has achieved, and it wouldn’t have been possible without the wonderful patience and relationship building of the staff in the Cardinal Hume employment service.”

Local company provides work experience

Corporate partner Tyman (An industrial equipment supplier) is supporting clients through our Employment and Learning team.

We're incredibly grateful to our corporate partners who are providing work experience to clients who face barriers to accessing permanent and long-term employment.

Georgia Yale (pictured), our Corporate Partnerships Fundraiser explains:

“At the Centre we are passionate about working with organisations in and out of Westminster to build engaging partnerships that support our services. Often the challenges that our clients are facing can feel huge and isolating, but with a supportive network we can empower our clients to thrive.”

She continues: “These partnerships allow us to increase our support to clients by tapping into the skills and resources that organisations have and by collaborating with their teams and employees, we are able to unlock essential donations and new opportunities. Therefore, driving real and tangible change for our clients.”

Our new corporate partner Tyman went above and beyond and hosted a 2-week work placement for one of our clients, Julia, who is currently studying for her accountancy qualification and was looking for work experience to enhance her CV. She kindly shared her experience with us:

“I am originally from Ukraine but came to the United Kingdom as a refugee due to the war. Since living here, I tried hard to find work but kept receiving rejections. Before I moved here, I worked for over 12 years in banking, and I also gained a Masters degree in Business. The



“From the beginning of our partnership, Tyman were dedicated to understanding the real significance of our work and the needs of our clients.”

Cardinal Hume Centre offered to help me gain some experience in the UK that would hopefully help me to gain a full-time role.

The team let me know that Tyman was interested in offering some work experience to a client, so I was really excited to work with them. We all worked together to make a plan of what would be most useful for me to do. They designed a detailed personal schedule for me, introducing me to all the processes and people within the business.

I felt like I am not someone else, I am a part of their team. Everyone was so friendly and welcoming and always found a way for me to feel involved in the business.

Now that I have this relationship with Tyman and the Centre, I can try and gain more experience through mentoring and workshops with other companies. With these experiences, I hope that I will now be able to find a job here that suits my skills and background.”

Rachel Alexander, Group Controls Manager at Tyman, reflected on the experience:

“Offering a placement was a very straight forward and pleasant experience. Julia asked lots of questions, suggested areas where she would like to learn more and really made the most of her opportunity. In addition to finance-related sessions, we also held sessions on improving her CV, interview technique, setting up a LinkedIn profile, IT/cyber security, and at the end of her 2-week placement, we held a mock interview.

Beyond the placement, everyone in Head Office has offered their assistance and support if she would like to reach out to us going forward.



To any other companies, I would say definitely get involved! It's extremely rewarding for both the client of the Centre and for their own employees. It's amazing to see how much everyone is willing to support and assist and it's great to see the client develop over the course of the placement.”

Georgia concluded:

“From the beginning of our partnership, Tyman were dedicated to understanding the real significance of our work and the needs of our clients, which was reflected in the incredible success of the opportunity they were able to provide for Julia. Thank you, Tyman, for all your support across the Centre, we are so grateful to have you on board!”

If you're interested in joining us as a corporate partner or learning more about the Centre's work, why not arrange an introductory call with our Corporate Partnerships Fundraiser today.

Georgia Yale
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Record number of families face homelessness in Westminster

In the last few years, homelessness in the UK has increased to unthinkable heights, hurting children and their families in the process. In London, nearly 85,000 children are living in temporary accommodation, a 14% increase in just one year.

Local councils are using temporary accommodation as an emergency measure, often placing children and their families in bed and breakfast or hotels. Here, in the Borough of Westminster, at least 3,600 children are homeless and living in often inadequate temporary accommodation. It's been estimated more than one in ten children and teenagers from Westminster are effectively homeless according to analysis of government data.

Just over a quarter of households with children applying for homelessness support in Westminster last year did so after the end of a private rental tenancy.

Our family service said they had a case in which a family of five were made homeless after they were evicted from their privately rented home. The family of two parents and three children, two of whom have special needs, were forced to go to Westminster Council for emergency accommodation.

For families that find themselves stuck in temporary accommodation for months, and usually years. It can have a tremendous impact on their mental and physical wellbeing. They often find themselves trapped in housing that harms their health, increases their financial hardships and severs their personal support networks.

One family told us: "Our hotel bathroom was so tiny that only one person could enter it. I have a son with special needs, and it's really difficult at



Lunch time at the Family Centre.

bathtimes, and that's not okay. You can't cook in the hotel, so I have to buy food every day which makes it really hard to manage my money."

As local authorities struggle to cope with the homelessness crisis. More people are requesting assistance from us than we can provide. Our housing advice teams is stretched and are having to focus nearly all their time on emergency applications.

To help more families in need, we're expanding the range of services we offer. September saw the launch of a pilot operation at two hotels in Paddington. Our Family Service team will run activities for the children living in the hotels and offer advice and assistance to their parents a part of the trial.

In 1986, Cardinal Basil Hume opened the Centre as a direct response to the high numbers of homeless young people sleeping on the streets and families living in inadequate bed and breakfast accommodation. It's regrettable that forty years later, the current housing crisis in the UK is causing us to refocus on that work. Regardless of the challenges, we continue to stay true to the Benedictine ethos of our founder Cardinal Basil Hume.

The current homelessness crisis has resulted in a dramatically increased workload for our Housing Advice team at the Cardinal Hume Centre. Housing Advisor Alastair takes us through a few of the cases he is managing in one single day.

Caseload 1

I had a follow-up meeting with a homeless family of three that we helped get emergency accommodation the previous day. The family of a Mum, Dad and 13-year-old daughter had been sleeping outside for some time and were referred to the Westminster City Council housing office by the Centre. Initially, the council refused to help them until we stepped in by raising a safeguarding concern. We called the children's services and the housing office before the family were given a hotel for the night. The Centre arranged for a cab to take the family to the hotel.

Caseload 2

I had a joint meeting with the manager of a Refuge Centre and a Domestic Abuse Support Worker from Advance Charity (who work with Westminster City Council) about one of our clients. Two weeks ago, a 19-year-old female survivor of abuse contacted us for help after she'd run out of places to stay.

The client is a survivor of familial abuse and was forced to leave her partner due to his behaviour. She was given accommodation, but it didn't work out and we arranged for Hammersmith and Fulham Council to provide her with short-stay accommodation. But following concerns for her safety, the Advance Charity worker secured a placement for her at a Refuge Centre in North London.

We discussed the short-term financial status of the client as she has no money or possessions, and a longer-term housing plan for her.

Caseload 3

I work with a Westminster City Council Family Navigator to ensure that my client (a homeless



Our Family Centre.

young Mum and her 3-year-old daughter) are given somewhere to stay for the night.

When I contacted the young Mum, she was very frightened. She said that Westminster City Council told her they could only stay in the hotel until 5pm and then advised to go to a library that was open. I emailed the council but didn't receive a response for some time.

I receive a call from the Family Navigator about my client who tells me that the case has been picked up by the council's Head of Family Services who is speaking with the Head of Housing. But there is no news on what will be done, and we're concerned that the Westminster Housing Office will close before a decision is made, and the family will be sent away again to call an emergency out of hours housing number.

I call my client with the news that she's been given hotel accommodation in Victoria, and she hugely relieved. I share the news with my Family Centre colleagues because she wants to come to the Centre to cook her meals and to give her child some space to runaround and play with the toys.

Thank you to Alastair for providing us with an insight into the workloads of our Housing Advice team at the Centre. The past few years have been a particularly challenging time for the Centre as the borough of Westminster has one of the highest number of children and their families living in temporary accommodation in London.

What’s coming up

Find out what’s going on here at the Cardinal Hume Centre and connect with other supporters and influence the way we work.

EVENTS

To reserve your complimentary tickets to any of our events, please telephone **020 7227 1650** or email events@cardinalhumecentre.org.uk. Maria in our Supporter Care team will be able to help with any queries.

CHARITY CHRISTMAS CARDS

The Cardinal Hume Centre charity Christmas cards are now available to buy. See all 12 designs on our Christmas Card Order Form. You can order by post (using our freepost envelope), from our website, by phone on **020 7227 1650** or you can pop into our charity shop and purchase a pack or two.



ADVENT CONCERT 2024

We are pleased to announce that the concert will feature the beautiful voices of The London Oratory School Choir, and that the Lord Mayor of Westminster will be in attendance.

Our annual Cardinal Hume Centre Advent Carol Concert will take place on **Wednesday 4th December 2024** at the Sacred Heart Church, 112 Horseferry Road, London SW1P 2EF.

Doors open at 6pm for a 6.30pm start followed by a reception. Spaces are limited, so contact us early for your complimentary tickets by phone or email.



ANNUAL ANNIVERSARY MASS IN MEMORY OF CARDINAL GEORGE BASIL HUME

We’ve already started planning for our annual anniversary mass in memory of the late Cardinal George Basil Hume. We hope that you’ll join us on 17th June 2025 to honour our founder’s legacy in making sure the work of the Centre continues and helps even more people in need.

To find out more or to book tickets, please email our events team at events@cardinalhumecentre.org.uk

CHRISTMAS CAMPAIGN 2024

Later this year, we’ll be launching our Annual Christmas Campaign to raise awareness and vital funds for the Cardinal Hume Centre. We hope to raise over £100,000 this year for vulnerable families and children who use our services at the centre.

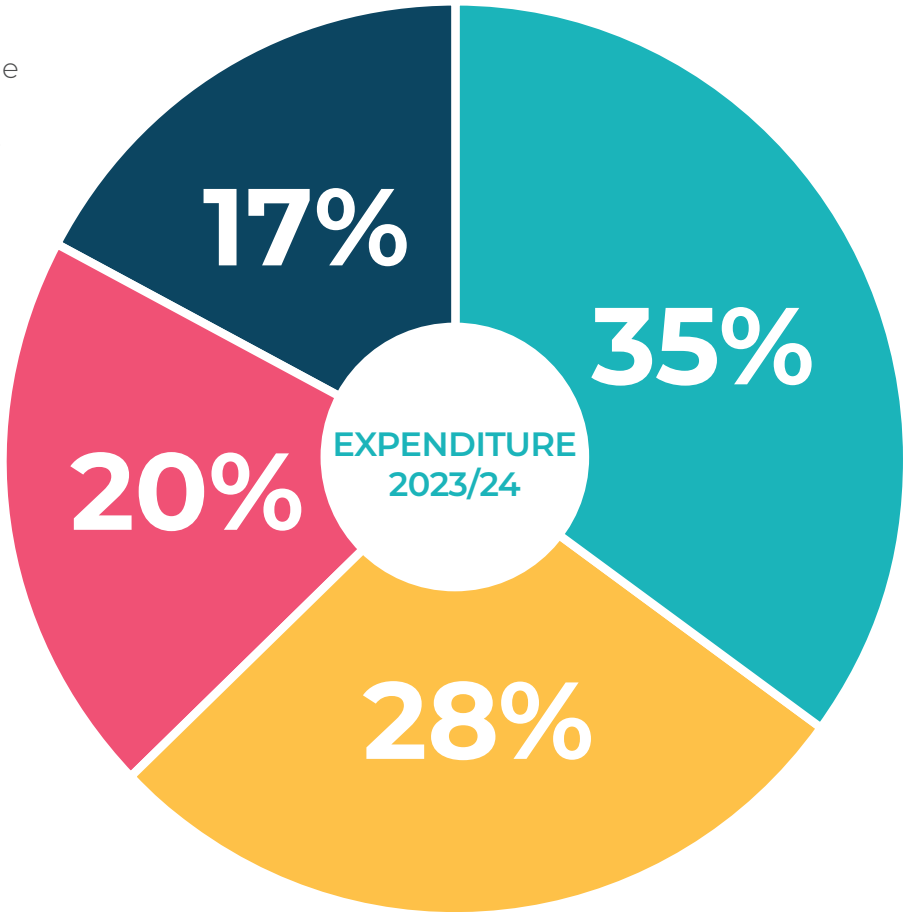
The campaign includes our annual Big Give matched funding appeal, Christmas volunteer drive, and lots more activities. To find out more about the campaign, please visit our website or keep a look out for a special letter from our team in late October.

The support you gave, *the difference you made*

As a charity, over 70% of our income comes from our supporters. Our work is only made possible because of the incredible generosity of donors. Statutory funding from Westminster City Council (WCC) also enables us to provide essential services to our clients.

HOW YOUR MONEY IS SPENT

Our expenditure in 2023/24 was £3.4M, of which 83% was spent on delivering services. The chart (right) shows where this was spent across our core activities.



- Advice and Assessment
- Housing and Residential Services
- Learning, Employment and Family Services
- Raising Funds



OUR DONATIONS

For every **£1 donated**, **83p went towards** service delivery.

168 children attending regular family service programmes



52 young people living in our hostel and flats



28 clients supported to gain or sustain employment

70% percentage of residents in education, training or work

1,318 people including 589 families with children and 312 people under 24 years old were helped at the Cardinal Hume Centre last year

“My son loves coming to the Cardinal Hume Centre and I feel more comfortable here than anywhere else. This is the best place.”

241 foodbank vouchers issued

171 clients supported to secure or extend their right to remain in the UK

Leave your own legacy

Legacy gifts, whose quiet yet powerful gestures left behind in Wills, play a significant role in powering the vital work of the Cardinal Hume Centre.

Last year, 15% of all the money raised by the Centre came from legacy donations – large and small bequests. Both gifts are equally important in helping us to continue to fulfil our founding vision of striving towards a society where everyone has a safe place to live and the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Our founder, Cardinal Basil Hume said: “We are called to be people of compassion and kindness, extending God’s love to all we encounter.” That’s why we’re so grateful to supporters like Brendan Gately who kindly bequeathed a legacy gift to the Centre in his Will.

BRENDAN’S STORY

Brendan had a strong commitment to the principles and activities of the Cardinal Hume Centre. Having supported the Centre for almost 10 years, he chose to bequeath a lasting gift to the Centre that honoured his faith.

Leaving a charitable legacy to the Centre not only ensures that we’ll continue to help young people facing homelessness in Westminster to thrive and nurture their potential for years to come; but it is also a very tax-effective way of giving as you can significantly reduce your inheritance tax by making a charitable donation in your Will.

Research has found that less than half of the UK population have made a Will. But incredibly just 7% of those individuals remember a charity in their Will. If you would like to help us fight poverty and homelessness in Westminster in future years, please contact our Legacy team on **020 7277 1650** or email **legacies@cardinalhumecentre.org.uk**



Reading in the Family Centre.

Special thanks...

...to all our amazing fundraisers who’ve raised vital funds for all our work here at the Cardinal Hume Centre.

BRENDAN’S BIG 4000

On the 13th May, dedicated supporter Brendan Hemmings completed the last leg of his Big 4000 challenge by arriving at the Centre. He walked 4,000 miles around the coast of England and Wales raising an incredible £35,983 for the Centre.

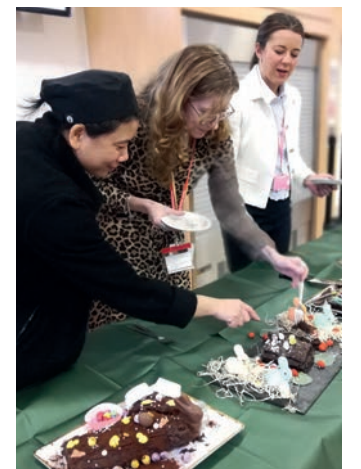


CHARITY FOOTBALL MATCH

Students from the University of Notre Dame in London and St Mary’s University in Twickenham took on a friendly game of football to raise money for the Centre. Lots of fun was had by everyone, with the American students securing a surprise 4-2 win against St Mary’s. Thank you for raising a whopping £3,247!

NO NUTS BAKE OFF

In March, Year 7 and 8 pupils at Westminster Under School raised an impressive £320 from their No Nuts Bake Off event. The judges included “Master Baker” Maria, from our Supporter Care Team, who helped to judge the delicious pastries and cakes. Congratulations to Seb who won with an Easter themed yule log.



HUMAN FRUIT MACHINE



The pupils and teachers at Westminster Under School had a terrific time raising £10,750 for the Centre. The

teachers became a ‘Human Fruit Machine’ for the day and the pupils had lots of fun trying to match winning lines of oranges, limes and lemons.

SUPERSTAR FUNDRAISER ALEXANDER

Alexander is a talented pianist who was recently awarded Musician of the Year at Westminster Cathedral Choir School. He is passionate about raising funds for the charity and raised an incredible £6,171 from a crowdfunding campaign which included matched giving from the Bank of America.

Alexander said: “I decided to crowdfund for a music therapy project at the Cardinal

Hume Centre because I’ve witnessed first hand the transformative power of music in fostering emotional healing and connection.”



Cardinal Hume Centre seeks new volunteers

1,318 people, among them **589 families** including **312 children and young people**, were helped to reduce their risk of homelessness at the Cardinal Hume Centre last year.

So much of this is supported by volunteers; scan the QR code or contact us on the details below to find a role that suits you:

- Collect for our foodbank
- Join our charity shop team on Horseferry Road in Westminster
- Help at study clubs for schoolkids, weekdays afterschool, or play sessions on Saturdays
- Support to clients who want to improve their English



www.cardinalhumecentre.org.uk/volunteer

"I enjoy volunteering for the Cardinal Hume Centre, meeting shop customers and helping sell items and raise funds.

Ying, shop volunteer



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Centre**
Each Person Matters