

# Homelessness...

it's more than a housing problem



A deeper insight  
into SPEAR's work

**SPEAR**  
*homelessness to independence*



**"SPEAR staff have continued to be some of the best people I have ever had the good fortune to meet"**

**"If it had not been for these people, these very dedicated people, I would be somewhere very, very dark"**

**"Since you found me and scraped me off my bench you have helped me put my life back together. You put a roof over my head. I moved onto a detox unit. Now you have housed me closer to home. I'm working. I feel secure and hopeful for the future"**



## Welcome to our SPEAR brochure

As you read, I hope you get a sense of the human experience of homelessness. At SPEAR, we know that homelessness is more than a housing problem. The routes into homelessness are often as traumatic as the experience itself. Consequently, the solution involves significant personal as well as practical change.

SPEAR faces the problem head on - providing a range of supported accommodation projects and complementary services which together promote sustainable health, housing and employment outcomes.

But it isn't just about what we do - it's also about how we do it. We invest the very best of our own abilities to support the developing confidence, self esteem, motivation and aspirations of the people we work with.

As we approach our 30th anniversary, I am struck by how much SPEAR has diversified and developed. However, we shall remain committed to putting the wellbeing of our clients centre stage.

This combination of practical and relational support gives us the best chance of facilitating real change in the lives of our clients.

We don't succeed in this task alone. The incredibly generous support we receive from local people, companies, community groups, churches and charitable trusts provide a very necessary complement to the funding we receive from Local Authorities. It is because we are funded in both ways that we are able to innovate and develop new services to meet the needs of the increasing number of people approaching for help.

I am inspired by what SPEAR staff and volunteers bring to their work and I'm inspired by the journey that our clients take in moving away from homelessness and tackling the other difficulties in their lives. I hope you are too.

I thank you for your support as we move forward together to tackle homelessness in our local communities.

Stuart Nevill  
Chief Executive

**"100% of clients resettled into private accommodation over the last year sustained their tenancies"**

**"80% of clients in the Programme achieve positive outcomes - either moving onto independent accommodation or engaging well with addiction treatment."**

**"90% of the clients in the Programme move onto independent accommodation. 95% of the clients engage in accredited training and education"**



## What we do

**Vision:** We strive for communities in which anyone facing or experiencing homelessness can quickly move into secure accommodation, get effective support, and work towards their hopes and aspirations.

**Mission:** To enable homeless people in South and West London find secure accommodation and work towards a positive future.

**Our services include:**

- A range of accommodation services for rough sleepers and other homeless people
- Support to find and sustain long term accommodation
- Support to address addictions
- Support to address health and other issues mental distress, relationship problems, and addictions
- Support to develop skills and achieve qualifications
- Support to prepare for and secure employment



**The Resettlement Programme** provides a co-ordinated 'pathway' through a range of accommodation based services which support homeless people from the streets, to sustainable independent living.

The programme works with around 200 clients at any one time.

**The Recovery Programme** focuses on the personal development aspect of a journey from homelessness to self-reliance. Clients in these services will tend to have complex health and social issues including addictions and mental health problems.

The programme works with around 80 clients at any one time.

**The Young People's Programme** provides services to support young homeless people so they can make a positive transition into adulthood. Many of the young people in these services have chaotic or institutional backgrounds and may have involvement with the criminal justice system.

The programme incorporates two young people's hostels in Merton and Richmond and works with around 30 young people a year.

## SPEAR's approach

We recognise that homelessness is rarely just a housing problem. It has a range of causes and is often an experience of isolation, fear, hopelessness or self-doubt. Quality support is vital for anyone who has experienced homelessness and is trying to build a better future. A professional and mature relationship promotes motivation, self esteem and optimism for people who may have these internal resources in short supply.

Quality support in a suitable housing context enables people who have lost hope to transform their lives. It gives them an opportunity to tackle addiction, change destructive habits, work towards education and employment, make a

positive contribution in their community, and most importantly to believe in their own potential.

At SPEAR, we are confident that everyone can improve their lives, and we recognise the impact of positive relationships. Our staff learn from the experiences of the people we work with, and we bring emotional intelligence, compassion and empathy to our work.



## Understanding homelessness

**Did you know... Every 15 minutes, a family becomes homeless in the UK?**

**Did you know... Relationship breakdown is the main cause of homelessness?**

**Did you know... Homelessness affects people from many walks of life**

**Did you know... The number of people sleeping rough in London is increasing**

**Did you know... 31% of people experiencing homelessness have alcohol problems, 30% have an ongoing mental health problem, 28% are trying to overcome a drug problem**



# Our Successes

In the face of a significant increase in local rough sleepers, we have developed and grown as a charity. More people than ever before have benefited from our work.

- We provide homelessness telephone advice to over 500 people a year
- We provide or broker accommodation for over 200 homeless people a year
- We have engaged over 200 homeless people in our education, training and employment programme
- We work with over 150 rough sleepers on the streets a year
- We have significantly reduced the time our rough sleeping clients wait to move off the street
- Our volunteers provide over 6,000 hours of support a year



## Martin's Story

Martin, a long-term drug user left his drug treatment following a family bereavement. He moved back to London to be near his young son, but couldn't find anywhere to live. Martin started sofa surfing and eventually started to sleep rough and started to use drugs again. Following repeated incidents of harassment he moved from a town centre to a remote location on the banks of the river in Richmond.

When SPEAR first met Martin he denied he was sleeping rough, but eventually admitted how terrified he was. Shortly after this he moved into SPEAR's rough sleeper hostel. While living there, he became involved with art projects, gardening, writing poetry and making Sunday lunch for other residents. After just four months, SPEAR secured him a tenancy of his own.

Martin has been in his new home for nine months now. There have been a few teething troubles but, where once he would have used this as an excuse to relapse, he's managing to stay clean. Meanwhile, he is planning for his future once again. His goals are to have a bigger role in his son's life and to give something back to the organisations that helped him. He is now teaching current hostel residents and other clients how to fish, with our support.

Talking about his new home, Martin told us: 'it's somewhere my mother and father can come, and finally, they don't have to worry about me.'

## Jamie's story

Jamie left school without qualifications and moved to London looking for some fun. He managed to get a job in the kitchen of a restaurant but shortly afterwards he got in with a bad crowd and started using drink and drugs. Over time his life spiraled out of control and he lost his job, his relationship broke down and he was evicted from his flat.

Jamie was at rock bottom. He slept on Richmond Green, had no possessions and ate from bins. He was referred to SPEAR and, after a waiting list, housed in the hostel and started on a drug and alcohol programme. Part of his programme was complimentary therapies which was something he found really interesting. With a lot of work Jamie came off of drugs and alcohol, was helped to take part in a 3-year complimentary therapy course. During this time, he continued to be supported by SPEAR and these on-going relationships built up his trust and confidence.

Jamie has just trained as a nurse. He says, "I realised that I was capable of achieving great things... I have in the last year learned how to live with myself and accept the past that was my life for what it was and move on; none of this I could have done alone... I have no hesitation in saying that if it wasn't for SPEAR I would not be alive."

**"We invest our passion and energy to develop communities in which anyone facing homelessness can quickly move into accommodation, get the support they need and work towards their goals and aspirations"**



## **SPEAR past and future**



### **History**

SPEAR was founded in 1986 by local resident, Penny Wade following the death of two people sleeping rough on Richmond riverbank. Her principle was that people shouldn't die because they don't have a home.

Since then we have been supporting homeless people and developing our services to respond to the growing problem of homelessness.

Today we work with young people and adults to broker accommodation for homeless people, work with rough sleepers on the street, support our clients to address mental health, addiction and relationship difficulties and support our clients into employment.

We invest our passion and energy to develop communities in which anyone facing homelessness can quickly move into accommodation, get the support they need and work towards their goals and aspirations.

### **Moving forward**

Looking forward we are committed to making a real lasting difference in peoples lives by:

- Increasing accommodation options to meet growing demand
- Building local partnerships
- Providing long term health and social benefits
- Developing our services to reflect how they are experienced by our clients
- Focussing on our ability to promote confidence, self esteem and motivation



**"Volunteering at SPEAR has been very rewarding. To be part of SPEAR, and see how they look after clients, supporting them through homelessness to independence is very inspiring"**

# Getting Involved

**How you can support our work.**

**Since the charity began, volunteers have played a key role in our work.**

**Volunteers get involved in delivering homelessness services. They take on particular roles in our Head Office and help us organise fundraising activities.**

**We will always need friendly, caring, enthusiastic individuals who are willing to spare some time to help.**

**Volunteers make a huge impact in the lives of homeless people.**

**Local companies and grant making trusts and foundations also support our work. All of this provides a vitally important complement to the funding we receive from Local Authorities to deliver services to homeless people.**

**For more information on our forthcoming events or to find out the different ways you can fundraise for SPEAR, please contact [fundraising@spearlondon.org](mailto:fundraising@spearlondon.org)**



**"Our work would not be possible without a huge amount of support from our local communities. We'd like to thank and acknowledge the generosity of the many individuals, community groups, companies, and charitable trusts"**



**If you are homeless or know of someone who is homeless please contact us on:**

0208 404 1481 or [info@spearlondon.org](mailto:info@spearlondon.org)

**To find out more about our work and discover how you can support us, please contact:**

[info@spearlondon.org](mailto:info@spearlondon.org)

**If you would like to volunteer for us, please contact us on:**

[volunteer@spearlondon.org](mailto:volunteer@spearlondon.org)

[www.spearlondon.org](http://www.spearlondon.org)    <https://twitter.com/SPEARLondon>    [www.facebook.com/SPEARLondon](http://www.facebook.com/SPEARLondon)

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## Thank You

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