

SPEAR

homelessness to independence

Wandsworth

Richmond

Merton

Kingston

Sutton

Addressing Homelessness in SW London in 2021

www.spearlondon.org

Registered charity: 1122206

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Welcome to **SPEAR's** Impact Report for 2021

According to the CHAIN (Combined Homelessness and Information Network) Report, although the numbers of rough sleepers across London went up by 3% last year, they are double that of five years ago – with over 11,000 people found sleeping rough across London.

At **SPEAR**, a record number of 1,017 people accessed **SPEAR's** services last year. During this challenging time, homelessness charities, including **SPEAR**, worked in partnership with Local Authorities to respond to the crisis of supporting rough sleepers off the streets, whilst preventing the spread of Covid-19.

The government's 'Everyone In' initiative commenced at the end of March 2020 to provide all rough sleepers with a place to stay safe amidst the pandemic and lockdowns. Our **SPEAR** teams worked tirelessly and swiftly to find emergency accommodation for rough sleepers such as B&Bs, hotels and university lets; whilst also brokering longer-term accommodation and support across our standard **SPEAR** services, including hostels, shared houses (HMOs) and independent flats.

Our Outreach Workers worked with a higher number of people with complex needs and entrenched rough sleepers, challenging our resources. Across our services, we continued to provide vital support such as confidence building, peer mentoring, training and skills, employment, and physical and mental health support, but had to adapt some of these services to make them Covid-19 safe.

Our Service Users (clients) played a key role in shaping our services, with two client surveys conducted by volunteers and **SPEAR** clients to gain feedback. Over 88% of the clients who responded said they were happy with the overall services **SPEAR** provides. We also identified where further support is needed, such as the teaching of more computer skills, healthy cooking, sports and access to counselling.



None of our work would have been possible without the tremendous support from the Local Authorities, commissioners, supporters, funders and volunteers. Like many charities, we faced the loss of community and corporate events but were overwhelmed at how this was replaced by Covid-19 grants, individual donors and online community support. New funding partnerships from the Local Authorities were commissioned, our existing funders adapted to support our emerging Covid-19 needs and we welcomed new funders on board. We were even involved in the 'Make Some Noise' campaign on Global's Radio stations – with one of our clients headlined on prime-time Classic FM, Heart, Capital Xtra and LBC.

Tim Fallon
Chief
Executive



Paul Doe
Chair of
Trustees



This combined support enabled our charity to significantly increase turnover in 2020/21, meaning we could continue to respond to the high numbers of people needing help. Financially, we felt the stresses and strains of the pandemic with many unbudgeted costs emerging, but due to overwhelming support and some unexpected and generous donations and grants, we covered our costs and ended the year with a surplus budget.

Our Volunteers too were remarkable, offering additional and niche support, such as sorting and delivering food parcels and other essentials and processing donated laptops for our clients. Some helped with our Client Covid-19 Survey, befriending and mentoring while others are now setting up healthy eating cookery classes and yoga classes. Even our clothing volunteers found new ways to deliver their service.

We know we face more hurdles ahead as new challenges emerge. The pandemic highlighted the importance of digital inclusion and many of our properties are not yet fully resourced to enable this for our clients – we need new and additional Wi-Fi systems as well as more training and equipment.

Special measures were put in place during Covid to help prevent homelessness through tenants being evicted for rent arrears. With these measures ending in May 2021, tenants with rent arrears are no longer protected. This, together with the ending of the furlough scheme, places many people in a precarious position for finding work.

These challenges alongside the mental health impact of the pandemic and relationships breaking down are all factors contributing to homelessness. We urgently need longer-term accommodation solutions, and more bed spaces and properties available to house people impacted by homelessness.

This has been a year like no other and the importance of supporting those people experiencing homelessness is as pressing as ever. We ask all of you to continue to find ways to support **SPEAR**, so that we can endeavour to stay strong and resilient for those in most need of our help. Together, we strive to End Homelessness.

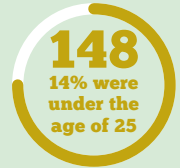
***"If it wasn't for SPEAR,
I wouldn't be alive today"***

SPEAR
client

Our key impacts on homelessness in 2021

LIVES

1,017 people accessed SPEAR's services



PROVIDING HOUSING



We worked with 686 verified rough sleepers across 4 boroughs



We provided supported housing for

200

people and brokered accommodation for 307 people

IMPROVING HEALTH

We are supporting a current caseload of over

175

clients with their health



We reduced the use of emergency health services such as A&E attendances by

45%



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & INNOVATIONS

We supported over

257

homeless people to develop their skills:



people contributed to their local community through volunteering

The total number of people qualifying as peer mentors increased from

14 to 17

**Would
you like
to**

**get
involved?**

To support:
supporters@spearlondon.org

To donate:
www.spearlondon.org

To volunteer:
volunteer@spearlondon.org



St George
charity
Fun Run

GoodGym
distributing
SPEAR
leaflets

Communications

  
4,910
social media followers 


39,915
people visited
our website
(+36%) 

Media coverage reaching
100,000+
readers and listeners on BBC Radio London,
Brooklands Radio, Capital, Classic FM,
Heart, LBC, Riverside Radio

How your money can help

£30

could buy a thermal
sleeping bag to
keep rough sleepers
warm during cold
winter nights

£80

could pay for an
outreach worker's
shift to find people
sleeping rough and
make them safe

£300

could fund a new
home-starter kit
full of essential items
for someone moving
into a new home

£600

could provide three
laptops to help people
access online training
and employment
opportunities

£1000

could support one
person to gain a peer
mentoring qualification
and work experience
in the social sector

Thank you to our volunteers

Massive **thank you** to our Trustees, Volunteers and Supporters during the unprecedented Covid19 pandemic.

We lost some group activities and face-to-face volunteering but adapted to a different way of operating. **Virtual Events** included an online comedy night, the 2.6 challenge, crowd funding appeals and individual giving.

120
volunteers donated
1,901
hours of
their time

**SPEAR
Trustees**
donated
231
hours

59
**SPEAR clients and
Peer Mentors** donated
734
hours of their
time



**Driving
to collect +
deliver food
donations**

**Sorting
essential
supplies
donated by
public**

**Volunteering
contributed
a value of
£31,600
to SPEAR**

**Fundraising
support**

**Remote
clothing
project**

**Governance
from
Trustees**

**Volunteering
focused on**

value to clients,

**activities from April 2020
to March 2021 included:**

**Client
surveys**

**Befriending
&
mentoring**

**Outreach
support**

Gardening

**Media,
photography,
videography
and comms
expertise**



**Digital
Inclusion
Programme**
(maintenance and
mentoring)

**Property
maintenance**

Thank you from everyone at SPEAR

We would like to thank all our supporters for their generosity over the last financial year. In particular we would like to give a special mention to:



The 2.6 Challenge, 29th May 1961 Charity, Agility Eco Services, Albert Hunt Trust, Avantia, Barnes Fund, Berkeley Foundation, Burntwood School, Belron Ronnie Lubner Charitable Foundation, Bloss & Beamer Memorial Trust, Calypso Browning Trust, Charlotte Wade Charity, Christ Church Teddington, City Bridge Trust, Comic Relief, CoMasonic Benevolent Fund, Crossword Cybersecurity, CVC Capital Partners, Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), Draper's Charitable Trust, Fine & Country Foundation, Garfield Weston Foundation, Global 'Make Some Noise', Halcrow Foundation, Hampton Fund, Hayburn Trust, Heathrow Community Trust, Howdens, John Laing Charitable Trust, Just Enjoy Yoga, Kate and Sarah Clothing Project, London Borough of Wandsworth Covid Response, London Community Foundation, London Funders, London Homeless Collective, Lotus and Laurel Yoga, Masonic Charitable Foundation, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), National Lottery Community Fund, People Against Dirty, People's Postcode Trust, QSIX, Richmond Community Facebook Group, Richmond Parish Lands Charity, Seven Hills, Southeastern Asset Management International (UK) Ltd, St Andrew's Church Ham, St George Plc, St James Twickenham, St Michael and All Angels, Streets of London, Surbiton High School, The Comms Co, The Margaret and David Walker Trust, The Masonic Province of Middlesex, The Queen's C of E Primary School, The Richmond Charities, The Trillium Trust, Tokio Marine Kiln, Waitrose, Wasteland, Whitton Baptist Church, Wilful Choir, Wimbledon Foundation Homelessness Fund.

We would like to acknowledge and thank the partners and commissioners we worked with:

Ministry of Housing, Community and Local Government (MHCLG), Greater London Authority (GLA), and local authority partners: London Boroughs of Richmond, Wandsworth, Kingston, Sutton and Merton for their contributions during a year in which SPEAR has increased the scale of its operations to meet growing demand from local people experiencing homelessness.

Avantia
Insurance
refurbishing homes
in Sutton with
SPEAR staff and
volunteers



Digital Inclusion Programme

- a snapshot

Inputs

Our own research highlighted only 12% of SPEAR clients had Wi-Fi and only 4% had access to a laptop.

SPEAR needed to address this fast with:

- Donations/Funding of new and used laptops, smartphones and Wi-Fi
- A dedicated part-time Digital Inclusion Worker funded for 12 weeks
- Technology experts volunteering to service the laptops and deliver digital training

Activities to support our Clients

- Digital literacy intro e.g. accessing: a computer, tablet, smartphone, email, video calls
- Online support for physical and mental health and addiction issues
- Online communication with friends, family, befrienders and wider support networks
- Understanding online finances, budgeting and salary, online bill payments and shopping calculations, online bills and shopping

Outcomes

27 people engaged in Digital Inclusion

20 people gained digital access and reported improved confidence

17+ people built independent living skills and social networks, improved mental health & wellbeing, and improved financial literacy skills and management

Impact

SPEAR's Digital Inclusion Worker, Sophea, held weekly workshops, supporting one client to enrol onto an English learning course:

"At the start, he couldn't speak English very well. The client borrowed a laptop and we downloaded an English language app. His confidence developed and he is excited to start college this year! Seeing these kinds of results, and the impact that my own actions and the support of SPEAR's Digital Inclusion Programme are bringing to various individuals, is why I love what I do."



Volunteers Helen and David working on resetting donated laptops

Feedback from clients:

"I have been looking for jobs with the laptop and also volunteering for things that I could do to help in the community"

"Thank you. Because of this (project) I was able to apply for jobs online"

More funding and donations are needed to continue this vital work to ensure that all SPEAR clients are digitally included.

