

## What is the St. John's Homelessness Initiative?

The initiative is a collection of businesses, organisations, charities, and government bodies affiliated with the St. John's development who have the same core aim of working towards the eradication of homelessness in Manchester City Centre. The St. John's development is a £1 billion property project that covers 13 acres of public realm and will contain a hotel, cinema, restaurants, retail, and workspaces. The development is ongoing with an expected completion date of 2022, and at peak construction it is estimated that a workforce of 2100 will be needed.

## What are the goals of the St. John's Homelessness Initiative, and how will these goals be achieved?

The St. John's Homelessness Initiative has three main goals:

**Awareness** – to raise awareness of the causes, impact, and solutions of homelessness to both organisations and the general public.

**Employment** – to aim to provide opportunities and support to assist 100 people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness into work in a variety of roles within the St. John's Development. This will be achieved through a collaboration with suppliers, government agencies, local charities and partnerships, and the development of an inclusive online job portal.

**Fundraising** – to raise a target of £250k through fundraising, allowing us to channel resources and effort to where it's needed most.

**Legacy** – Annual objectives have been set out with the main partners but as this initiative grows, we will include our St. John's tenants and occupiers so that we can continue to contribute towards the eradication of homelessness long past the development period. We want to create a meaningful and sustainable impact on our community which will leave a legacy by establishing a model for how property developments can approach social value in partnership. We are doing this by strengthening & uniting existing initiatives around homelessness and paving our own path we hope to tell a collective story for how St. John's is working to end homelessness.

## Who are the partners that form the St. John's Homelessness Initiative?

The steering committee is led by representatives of the below parties. These partners have been drawn to this initiative by their desire to assist and work collaboratively towards aiding the homelessness challenge prevalent in Manchester City Centre. They all signed a Memorandum of Understanding to outline their commitments in 2018.

**Allied London** – a property company leading the St. John's neighbourhood development (Gabe Erinle)

**Lendlease** – an international property and infrastructure company (Amanda Boyd)

**McLaren** – a construction and property development contractor (Mark Powell)

**Laing O'Rourke** – a design, manufacture, & construction company (Lauren Murphy and Mark Cottam)

**Manchester City Council** – particularly the work and skills team (Kate McDonald and Teun Van Rooij)

**Department of Work and Pensions** – a branch of government responsible for welfare, pensions, and maintenance (Chris Hulse)

**CityCo.** – a city centre management company (Alex King)

**Forever Manchester** – a charity that raises money to fund, support, and inspire community activity (Phil Gilmore)

**Big Change MCR** – a campaign that supports individuals who are homeless by paying for items that they need (Keith Ashley)

**Manchester Homelessness Partnership** – an inclusive partnership of charities and individuals co-producing solutions for homelessness (Dee Lowry)

**Street Support Network** – a charity connecting and supporting local people and organisations to help end homelessness (Gary Dunstan)

**St. John's Homeless Ambassadors** – 47 trained colleagues from across all the partner organisations who support and advocate for this initiative

## Why are the partners involved in this scheme?

Homelessness is a prominent and growing cause in Manchester which anyone who lives and works in the city is affected by. The construction and development partners who are involved engage with the local community wherever they work. They also have years of experience in delivering impressive CSR and social value projects which can guide the charity partners to shape this initiative. Each of the Homeless Ambassadors had strong personal motivations for being involved.

## How will the donations raised for the St. John's Homelessness Initiative be distributed?

The St. John's Homelessness Fund is managed by Forever Manchester who receive a 10% administration fee as standard. Any money raised will go towards helping people who are homeless, rough sleeping, or at risk of homelessness in Manchester City Centre via Big Change MCR and The Manchester Homelessness Partnership. Any money raised will be split 50:50 between these two partners and spent inline with their agreed priority needs are. The first milestone we would like to reach is £5,000 which would top-up the diminishing Manchester Homelessness Partnership coproduction expenses pot to allow us to continue working with people who are currently homeless in everything we do.

## How is the St. John's Homelessness Initiative working with people who have personal experience of homelessness?

Big Change MCR, Street Support Network, and the Manchester Homelessness Partnership work through co-production. This means including people who are or have been homeless in everything they do – from idea to delivery – and doing this in a way which is equal, dignified, respectful and flexible. Each organisation also has people who have personal insight into homelessness in their team. Through working together with people who have an informed and

lived knowledge of this issue, solutions to help others can be found and enacted upon in a much more effective way.

## **How is the St. John's Homelessness Initiative working with the government and institutions to give rise to systematic change?**

As far as we are aware this is the first time that developers, contractors and supply chain organisations have worked together as a united team with charity and statutory partners. We believe that focusing experience and resource on three main goals will create a larger impact which will also be more meaningful and sustainable. If this is successful, we could create a new model for how all future developments in Manchester approach social value.

## **How can I support this initiative?**

We welcome any support that you feel comfortable doing but here are some specific ideas:

**Awareness-raising** – Get in touch with Dee Lowry to arrange a coproduced awareness raising session with your colleagues. ([dee@streetsupport.net](mailto:dee@streetsupport.net))

**Fundraising** – arrange events and projects such as getting a group to run the Manchester 10k. Speak to business contacts and partner organisations to increase potential donations. Please direct any raised money to our Just Giving Page: [www.justgiving.com/campaign/stjohnshomelessnessinitiative](http://www.justgiving.com/campaign/stjohnshomelessnessinitiative)

**Employment** – if you are an employer, please sign-up to join the Inclusive Jobs Board (due to launch in summer 2019). For more information, or to start recruiting now please contact: [dee@streetsupport.net](mailto:dee@streetsupport.net)

## **What else can I do to contribute towards ending homelessness in Manchester?**

Look at what 'needs' are listed on Street Support: [www.streetsupport.net/give-help](http://www.streetsupport.net/give-help)

Become a regular volunteer at one of the established organizations that provide support services to people who are homeless

Use your trade skills and business contacts to encourage more organisations to get involved

Empower and encourage; empathy is more useful than pity. Recent studies have shown people are more likely to stay off the streets if they are given the opportunity to have power and responsibility themselves to control their own lives.

Smile and have a conversation with someone who appears to be homeless – being on the streets can be lonely – just a general chat can be uplifting.

For more ideas specific to businesses please see our guidelines at: [www.mhp.org.uk](http://www.mhp.org.uk)

## **I am worried about someone who might be at risk of becoming homeless, what should I do?**

If you or someone you know may be at risk of becoming homeless please seek support sooner rather than later. One

of the first thing you will need to do is speak with your local authority, for Manchester City Centre, you can drop-in or get an appointment at Town Hall. There is lots of good advice and information online, we would suggest having a look at Shelter, Crisis, and Homeless Link. If you or the person you are concerned about is under 26, please contact Centre Point.

## **Why do people become homeless in Manchester?**

Anyone can become homeless. The most frequent reason why someone becomes homeless in the UK are related to relationship breakdown, in Manchester it is loss of private tenancy. Often there are compounding factors for an individual that causes their situation to get worse, but there are lots of external factors that play a big role too:

- The support system is not open or flexible
- There is not enough social housing
- Social housing is privately owned and managed
- There is not enough affordable housing
- People are not being part of a community
- Cuts to local government budgets
- Services are understaffed and stretched
- Reforms to the welfare system (Universal Credit)
- Unfair wealth distribution
- Cyclical poverty & associated patterns of behaviours

## **Why might people who have been homeless struggle to find employment?**

For us, inclusive employment means that everyone, irrespective of their background, has the same ability to access training and employment in the open labour market. Many standard recruitment exercises actually put barriers in place for people who are or have been homeless, e.g.:

- A university degree listed as essential criteria when it may not actually be required to do the job well
- Not making it clear on roles profiles that there may be flexibility on some things (e.g. working hours)
- Candidate may have long or unexplained gaps in CVs
- Candidate may have English as a second language
- Only advertising on your website or exclusive platforms
- Advertising online only
- Having a very narrow period of time for responses
- Not allowing people to ask questions before applying
- Not making it clear that reasonable adjustments can be made for the interview (e.g. covering travel costs)
- Asking interview questions that do not encourage or allow people to share their skills and experience which may be 'non-traditional'
- Focusing on hard skills and not personal traits
- Assumptions that people who have been homeless can only do entry-level roles
- Confidence of candidate in their own ability
- Fear of transitioning from benefits to income