

Alabaré Newsletter

Spring 2021



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Working Together to Rebuild Lives Beyond Covid

This winter has been one like no other. Our teams are continuing to work on the front line of this pandemic, welcoming in those who have found themselves in crisis and homeless in these most dangerous times, and keeping residents safe.

It remains an incredibly difficult time, not least with the big challenges of fundraising during Covid, but with your support, we have been able to keep our services open, and provide support for those who are most disadvantaged and vulnerable in our communities.

Back in lockdown, our services have seen increasing anxiety amongst the residents, many of whom have underlying health conditions which often lead to chaotic lifestyles. The effect on mental wellbeing is something we are all extremely aware of so we are glad to have been able to open, and now expand, our Riverside Sanctuary Mental Health and Wellbeing service over the last year.

Sadly, we expect rising job losses will lead to evictions in the private rental sector this year, putting more people at increased risk of homelessness.

Before the pandemic, around 35% of private tenants and 42% of social tenants worked in the hard-hit employment sectors; manufacturing, retail, hospitality and the arts,

entertainment, and recreation. By June last year around 32% of private rental employees and 34% of social rental employees were furloughed.

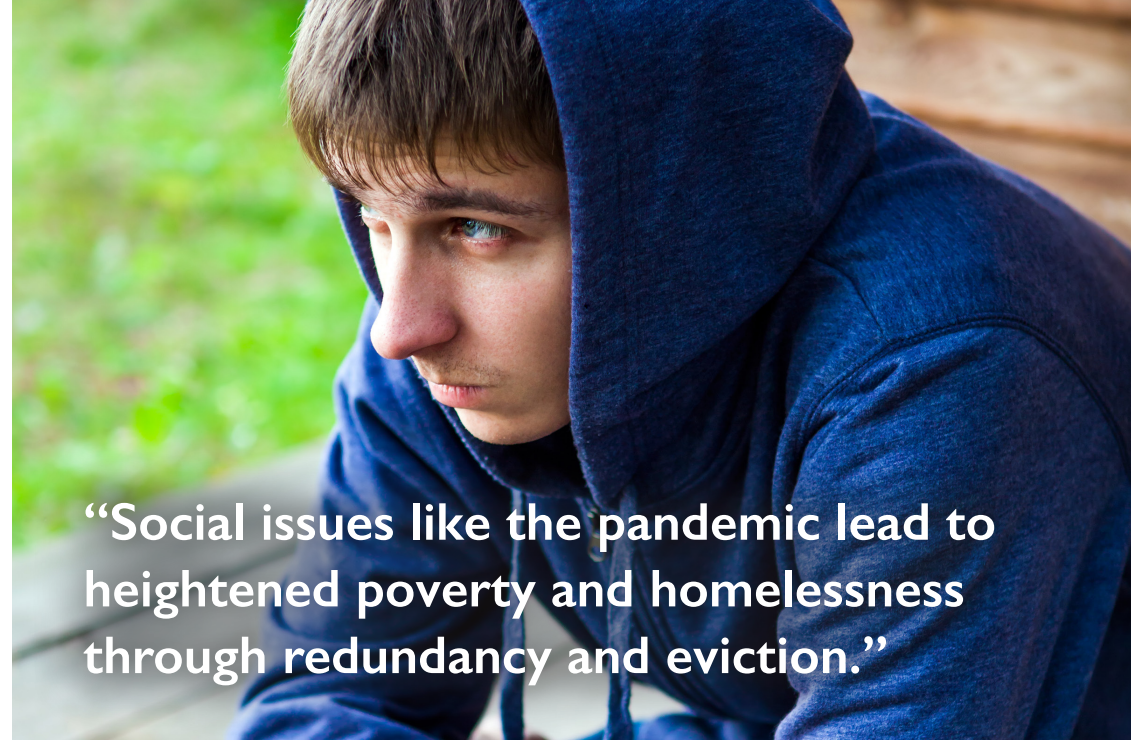
A disproportionate number of these are young people under 25 years of age who were already in low income, insecure positions.

Thankfully, your support has meant we continue to be here, to help people like 18 year old Josh who moved in with us during the pandemic after he was no longer able to afford his rent. It took several weeks for Josh to adjust to living in a shared home, but gradually with support from the Alabaré team, Josh has found the confidence to enjoy the company of others again.

During his stay with us Josh has completed his Alabaré tenancy training programme, Home & Money Lite, and is receiving support from his Alabaré Employability Mentor. He is now applying for jobs and is looking forward to getting his own flat once more.

To find out how you can help us be there for others like Josh, please go to www.alabare.co.uk

*1 Joseph Rowntree Foundation Annual Report
*2 Shelter and Savills: Housebuilding and the pandemic
*3 OS Universal Credit Statistics: Gov.uk



“Social issues like the pandemic lead to heightened poverty and homelessness through redundancy and eviction.”

Housing Poverty Facts


- 98,300 households were in temporary accommodation in 2020 up 14% from 2019*¹
- Reports estimate less than 5% of the 90,000 units assessed as social housing need was built in 2020 *²
- By August 2020, almost 4.6 million households were receiving Universal Credit. An increase of almost 90% from the beginning of the year*³

“Thank you. This service has been really helpful especially during stressy Covid times”

Drop-In Centre

The pandemic has meant we have had to reduce the Drop-In service for rough sleepers in order to comply with social distancing needs. However, the service at Salisbury's Alabaré Place has managed to continue in part, operating outdoors with a mobile catering unit so users have somewhere to go for a hot meal and to receive valuable support.

Several of our services have been supported by visits from the **Dentaid** team. These make a huge difference to our residents who can often struggle to access dental healthcare. Not only does this rid them of pain and discomfort but residents say they feel happier and more confident, knowing that their teeth are cared for.



Your support has saved the lives of people like Chrissy

Chrissy stayed with Alabaré for a year after battling a drug and alcohol addiction since she was a teenager. Over winter she had been sleeping in a car, sofa surfing and sleeping rough. This is an excerpt from an interview during lockdown while home-schooling her son.

“For many, addiction is sparked by childhood trauma, which mine was. It’s an amazing thing recovery. But it really is a miracle, for someone who’d been lost so long.”

“One word describes it all, Alabaré gave me hope. My family had pretty much disowned me. I was in hospital in an induced coma and pretty near to dying before I came to Alabaré. I’ve seen life from the very bottom, the harsh reality of being a drug addict living on the street and it isn’t a good place.”

How did we assist you at Alabaré?

First, it was a roof over my head. It was shelter. It was warmth. It was food. It was kindness. If you’re struggling for somewhere to sleep and something to eat,

you don’t start thinking about changing your behaviour. Then it was individuals at Alabaré, who inspired me and sometimes gave me some tough love. One key member of staff particularly showed me that there was another way and that it was possible to change my life around.

“I’m living my life now, before I was just existing to a certain extent.”

So, how’s your life changed as a result?

Well. Wow. I’m coming up to three years clean. I work for a charity supporting people with mental health and housing issues and I’m a full-time mum. I’ve completely changed my life around. I feel the lived-in experience I’ve got and the reward I feel from supporting others is what fills my emotional tank now.

Is there anything else you’d like to tell us about?

Just to express my gratitude really. Sometimes I’ll be doing something like decorating the Christmas tree and I get this overwhelming sense of gratitude. Thank you.

Riverside Sanctuary New 16years+ Service

With the ongoing pressures of the lockdown increasing already high levels of poor mental health and anxiety, we are grateful to now be able to offer our Riverside Sanctuary service to 16 and 17 year olds as well. Our professional friendly team are available everyday from 3pm to 11pm, to talk to anyone in the Bath, North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire areas, who is struggling with mental wellbeing. Reach the team on 01722 466680 or email riversidesanctuary@alabare.co.uk

We’re delighted to partner with Aslan Christian Books, a Wiltshire family company with over 30 years in the book trade.

Covering a fantastic range of Christian titles across multiple denominations and interests, all at great prices, they have a bi-monthly FREE magazine presenting hand-picked titles and new releases direct to your door.



www.aslanchristianbooks.com

Alabaré Upcoming Events



The Big Sleep at Home online event

This year Alabaré's flagship event is a little different. Instead of joining us, we are asking you to hold your own Big Sleep at Home in a fun, safe and interesting place. All we're asking is that for one night you swap your bed for a sleeping bag and help raise vital funds for Alabaré's work with the homeless. We will be providing fun activities online, entertainment and some friendly motivation so that we can help one another through the night.

Date and Time:

Friday 5th March 20:00 – 07:00

Location: At home and online

Enquiries: fundraising@alabare.co.uk

Register: thebigsleepathome.eventbrite.co.uk



Thames Path Challenge something for everyone

England's greatest river provides a fantastic backdrop for an unforgettable challenge. Over 3000 adventurers will join the Putney Bridge start with the full 100 km route heading upstream to Henley along the famous Thames Towpath. Through Richmond, Hampton Court, Runnymede and Windsor, with some wonderful historic scenery en-route to a riverside finish line. With full support & hospitality – and with half, quarter and 10 km distance options – there's a Thames Path Challenge for everyone.

Date: 11-12 September

Time: Varies according to challenge

Location: Putney Bridge London

Event Enquiries: l.knight@alabare.co.uk

Register: ultrachallenge.com/thames-path-challenge



Other planned activity thus far...

With events severely hampered by the pandemic, our fundraising team has had to be especially nimble. We are working on a number of events for later this year into next:

Padlock Project - #ThisIsMyHome

Join us as we raise awareness on homelessness with a pavement project and installation in cities across the south. Launching this spring we hope to travel from Salisbury to Cardiff, Bristol and Plymouth.

Spinnaker Tower Challenge

Take a 100-metre abseil down the side of Portsmouth's iconic landmark or sleepover at an exclusive Big Sleep at the top of the tower. Details online.

Gibraltar Race to The Sun 2022

You are invited to join ex-SAS Major Ken Hames in our Race to the Sun - cycling from Salisbury to Gibraltar in May 2022 to raise funds for our Community Self Build Veteran programme. Registration is now open race-to-the-sun.eventbrite.co.uk



Alabaré eternal thanks

The last year has often meant our staff and residents have had to face some unprecedented and worrying times. In particular over Christmas though everyone was overwhelmed by the kindness of the local communities in which we work.

For this reason, our teams have specifically asked us to thank the community at large for their generosity, some of whom created gift bags, or hampers, gave a financial donation or dropped off food supplies and gifts. Furthermore, the Salvation Army cooked over 700 meals last year, while many retailers and supermarket chains provided, and continue to provide, vital food donations.

All in all, this meant residents have been able to manage a little more easily during these challenging times and managed to enjoy a better than anticipated Christmas.

Discover more about our events:
alabare.co.uk



Creativity Throughout Lockdown

Many of our usual group activities have faced constraints during Covid, meaning that our teams have had to develop new ways for residents to be creative. Having the chance to take part in activities that can develop a sense of calm and lead to enhanced self-esteem and confidence, has been important for the mental wellbeing of clients and residents across all our homes and services.

Across Alabaré we have developed a programme called Creative Spirit, born out of the recognition that it is often much easier for clients to share their stories and their concerns while they are doing something else. Cooking

a meal, doing some art or gardening, or even just going for a walk alongside a support worker can make the deepest feelings and traumas experienced so much easier to share.

Barnabas House welcomed a new chaplain Lydia Reese this autumn and during lockdown Lydia was able to get to know residents by working on the garden, which offers a chance to connect while doing something creative together. Now with Lydia's assistance, they are working to transform their garden into a welcoming space for residents as well as making space for birds, frogs, hedgehogs, and dragonflies. The plan is to expand on this in the months ahead with a small wildlife pond, as well

as well as developing a flower lawn and growing some soft fruits. The group has had to dig hard to remove bamboo and other plants which have taken over the beds and are happy to already see the fruits of their labours. Lydia also supports our work in our Greening Alabaré Project, as we commit to reducing our carbon footprint throughout our charity.

Much of Alabaré's work at Barford Development Centre and Old Sarum Garden Centre with clients who have a learning disability or autism, focuses on creativity.

In the run-up to Christmas, both were very well supported by their local community with their "by appointment shops" producing and selling a terrific range of handmade gifts, refurbished garden tools and wonderful ornaments. Residents in our Learning Disability homes have enjoyed a wide range of activities during lockdown including carving pumpkins, making nativity sets and holding their own James Bond themed night.

So as the first signs of spring begin to form and as garden shoots begin to appear, we look forward to offering more creative opportunities and seeing the fantastic therapeutic benefits they bring.

Learn more about our Learning and Development projects by following their Facebook Pages.

Find us both on Facebook

@OldSarumGardenCentre

@BarfordDevelopmentCentre



Interested in volunteering?
Call our team:
01722 344470



Veteran Self-Builders Move In

Against all the odds our six fantastic Veteran self-builders managed to move into their new homes in Leominster, Herefordshire just in time for Christmas.

The 18-month scheme saw them as part of a team building 19 affordable homes. The aim of the scheme; a collaboration between Alabaré Community Self-Build (Veterans) Scheme and Stonewater, was to work alongside local contractor J Harper & Son (Leominster) Ltd to gain valuable, transferable workplace skills.

Despite multiple delays caused by the pandemic, meaning everyone had to pull out all the stops, the homes were completed just days before Christmas.

Ken Hames, of Alabaré's Community Self-Build (Veterans) Scheme says, "Self-Build has two aspects to it. The obvious

outcome is a number of dwellings for veterans in housing need. But more importantly, the Veteran self-builder rebuilds their life by building their own home. The site itself becomes a platform for recovery and transformation, leading to work and independent living."

"This scheme has changed my life. Only last year I was sleeping rough with no hope and my health suffered. Now I have got my self-esteem back and I am going to have a home I can bring my children to. I have also gained qualifications and work experience that will help me get a new job which will support me and my family. It's been fantastic and thank you to you all."

Dwain Veteran self-builder

What does "homelessness" really mean?

Primary reasons people in the UK become homeless are poverty and unemployment, combined with the lack of affordable housing.

Although people with mental health or substance abuse issues can wind up homeless, life events, such as domestic violence, housing eviction, job loss, or relationship breakdown are also significant contributing factors. People may also become homeless when they leave prison, care, or the army with no place to live when they return.

There are 3 broad definitions:

- As the most visible, rough sleepers are highly vulnerable. Many suffer health and/or mental health problems.
- Hidden homeless are those without their own residence, tenancy or family home. Often called "sofa surfers," many live with friends or family, in hotels, hostels, B&B's, or in temporary housing such as sheds, vans or cars.
- Statutory homeless are judged to be unintentionally homeless with priority needs. Often they are vulnerable and entitled to specific benefits.

We work with clients on the root cause of homelessness to ensure they can leave homelessness behind for good.



New Alabaré Patron - Revd Joanna Jepson

Joanna is an Anglican priest, author, broadcaster, coach and Army chaplain who is currently serving as chaplain to the Royal Wessex Yeomanry and the Army Training Regiment.

Joanna writes and presents for Radio 4 and Radio 2. She has written for the national press including The Independent, The Times and The Daily Telegraph. She speaks at schools, conferences and retreats on body image, spirituality and fashion, faith and justice.

Before ordination, Joanna worked with teenage victims of drug and domestic abuse and lived in a Welsh convent with 13 contemplative nuns and monks.

"The aims that Alabaré holds and the compassion with which it carries out that vision is inspirational, and I look forward to the opportunities that lie ahead as a team."

Young people are speaking, but is society listening?

Hosea is a Support Worker with young people at Alabaré, and has recently achieved his Masters Degree in Human Rights and International Relations, which he studied for in addition to doing his day job. He is passionate about the future of all young people, and especially those who are disadvantaged.



Meeting many young people, Hosea says he often finds they have low self-worth, and lack drive and determination, and worries that as a society we should do more to understand their needs.

He says, "Let us come together as communities and individuals to understand their story and not define who they are without seeking first to understand them. Fundamental to my role at Alabaré is listening, really hearing what young people are saying. By encouraging young people to share their stories and experiences, we can perhaps build better communities, which in turn may lead to reduced crime, increased engagement in education and employment, and better youth mental health. By taking this time we can learn more and maybe at the same time hear an interesting, impactful story."

Alabaré currently runs 17 projects for vulnerable young people across Wiltshire and Hampshire.

If you would like to make a lasting difference to homelessness, why not consider sponsoring a room or leaving a legacy?

By sponsoring a room for £12 a month you can help someone escape the devastation of homelessness for good.

By leaving a gift to Alabaré in your Will, you help us be there for homeless and vulnerable people who have nowhere else to turn, long into the future.

www.alabare.co.uk / 01722 344484.

Models may be used and names changed to protect client confidentiality.

Alabaré Christian Care & Support, Riverside House, 2 Watt Road, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP2 7UD

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