

## Week 3: Kingston

The project being supported by the Bishop's Lent Call in Kingston Episcopal Area in 2022 is Glass Door, which coordinates the UK's largest network of open-access services for people affected by homelessness.

### Glass Door: providing shelter since 1999

Glass Door has been running emergency winter night shelters in west and southwest London since 1999, with about a dozen churches in the Diocese of Southwark helping to provide these.



Volunteers at the Ace of Clubs in Clapham.

Faced with the prospect of being forced to shut the shelters during the COVID-19 pandemic, the charity instead launched new services to ensure that people experiencing homelessness could safely stay in individual rooms and had access to food and other support. When plans to reopen the shelters this winter had to be put on hold because of the Omicron variant, Glass Door once again moved to the use of individual rooms in hostel-style accommodation. Last winter, 199 individuals found a safe place to stay across two hostels. This year, the hostel is full, and the waiting list has had to close to allow caseworkers time to support people into more permanent accommodation.

Crucially, Glass Door provides more than just emergency shelter. The charity also provides the wrap-around support to help people out of homelessness. All year round, people can find advice and support from trained caseworkers based at five partnering drop-in centres, including the Ace of Clubs in Clapham and the Vineyard Community Centre in Richmond. Guests of these drop-in centres can also access other services, such as lunch, laundry and showers.

People who turn to Glass Door receive help to find housing, replace lost IDs, open bank accounts, find employment and more. Last year, despite the limitations associated with the pandemic, 1,645 individuals received support from Glass Door, and a record-breaking 317 guests moved into longer-term housing.

The charity has a Tenancy Support Worker who helps guests after they have been housed, ensuring that those who move into housing do not fall back into homelessness. A specialist caseworker supports guests into work. Despite the many challenges associated with the economy during the pandemic, at least 47 guests have found employment.



*The Bishop  
of Southwark's*

# LENT CALL 2022

*"My people will live  
in peaceful dwelling  
places, in secure  
homes, in undisturbed  
places of rest."*

— Isaiah 32:18



*Raising money for  
the dispossessed*



**Lent Call 2022**  
**The Bishop of Southwark's Lent Fund Registered Charity No 1075122**  
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The charity assists those who have often been turned away from other services and believes that some of its success has to do with its open-door policy and welcoming ethos. The Christian belief that everyone has inherent dignity is fundamental to the charity and it was founded by representatives from local churches who wanted to do something about the rise in people sleeping rough. Nonetheless, people of all faiths or none are welcome to use the charity's services.

Behind each statistic are hundreds of individual guests, each with a unique story. This past winter, at least 93 were refugees or asylum seekers. At least 23 were fleeing domestic violence, and 10 were victims of modern slavery. Guests experiencing multiple challenges such as a relationship breakdown, trauma, alcohol dependency and debt found help to address these issues and become more stable and self-sufficient.

### David's story

David, a 56-year-old street cleaner, was queuing for takeaway food from Ace of Clubs last summer when he heard someone speaking Spanish. David is originally from West Africa and has lived in the UK for 14 years, but he communicates better in Spanish. David approached the Spanish speaker, Glass Door senior caseworker Patricia, for her help. David, who was newly street homeless at the time, had been kicked out without warning of the house where he had been living for four years. He didn't know he had been living there illegally, subletting a room from a friend without the landlord's permission. The landlord took away his keys and didn't even give him the chance to take his belongings. The landlord also refused to return his rent for the month and, unable to afford a new place, David had no choice but to sleep on the streets.

"Many people with poor English language skills find themselves in similar situations," says Patricia. "They rely on word of mouth, often finding accommodation that is off the books and without formal agreements in place. It's a precarious position. They have no rights and can lose their housing at a moment's notice."

The first question Patricia asked was if David had pre-settled or settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme. David knew about Brexit but was not aware that he had to make a separate application to remain in the UK and access state support. As a result, he had missed the 30 June 2021 application deadline, but luckily his situation fell under the list of reasons to justify missing it. Despite David having an expired Spanish passport and not having the right proof of residency, Patricia was able to make a successful application on his behalf using his HMRC records. She also supported him with a homeless application to the local council, so that he could be taken off the streets and placed in temporary accommodation. David is still in temporary accommodation while he looks to find a flat in the private rental sector, which he will pay for with his salary.

£10 could provide an introductory assessment session with a caseworker, giving someone the initial support they need to move beyond homelessness, and £32 gives someone who would otherwise be on the street an individual room and three meals a day. £85 can provide 10 sessions with a support worker.

***We hope that donations to the Bishop's Lent Call can help someone to find safety, community, and a place to call home. With your help, those supported by Glass Door can work with trained advisers to find a route out of homelessness. In this way, we seek to realise God's wish in Isaiah 32:18, that all his people "live in peaceful dwelling places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest". Find out more at [southwark.anglican.org/lentcall](https://southwark.anglican.org/lentcall)***



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Walking  
Welcoming  
Growing