

Homeless
women in
London



Marylebone Project

Empowering homeless women towards
independent living

I need
your help





Introduction from the Chair of the Marylebone Project Board and the Chief Executive of Church Army

Wilson Carlile founded Church Army in 1882 with a vision of transforming human lives, to bring change to communities, and to make the world a better place. For over 100 years Church Army has been working across the UK and Ireland to alleviate people from poverty, addictions and homelessness.

Today the Marylebone Project is a key part of the outworking of this vision. The project is found in the heart of Central London, seeking to provide a home for women who find themselves homeless. The women who find a home in the Marylebone Project come from every walk of life, from dozens of backgrounds, and we are committed to helping to change their lives. Many of them are asylum seekers; others are fleeing domestic violence, others trying to rebuild their lives after a trauma that left them homeless. The Project has 112 beds, and provides specialist support to the women who use our service, to empower them into independent living.

In addition to our residential units, we have the Valentia Suite (mental health unit) and a well equipped Day Centre. The Day Centre provides additional help and support to dozens more women who do not stay residentially in the Project. From a hot shower and a good meal, to training courses, to art and drama sessions, the Day Centre aims to empower women, and give them the tools and support they need to make informed changes in their lives.

At the heart of our vision for the Marylebone Project, are the words of our President, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, that the women we serve are "Very Special People" that God loves them deeply, and we yearn for each woman to see how amazing she is in God's eyes, and indeed ours.

Thank you for reading this pack, and thank you for your interest in the work of the Marylebone Project. We look forward to continuing to partner with you in the years to come. Together we can make a difference, together we can change the lives of the women we serve, to help them see they are loved by God, and empower them into independent living.

With best wishes

Mark Russell

Chair - Marylebone Project Board and CEO of Church Army
www.churcharmy.org.uk

About us

The Marylebone Project is a partnership between Church Army and the Portman House Trust, and is a Registered Social Landlord. Our aim is to work with vulnerable homeless women and to empower them towards independent living, through helping them to make informed choices about their lives. By providing a range of services which are housed in various facilities in the Project, over 7,000 women have been helped, since a major refurbishment in 1996 in our residential units. This is alongside the thousands who have been helped by the other services we have offered over the last century.

Our ethos is that each woman is a very special person and through the themes of :

- **Spirituality** – that God loves each person regardless
- **Hospitality** – that all are welcomed
- **Empowerment** – equipping women to make informed choices
- **Resettlement** – in partnership with the women encouraging them towards independent living


We believe that we are and will continue to make a lasting difference.

Dedicated solely to meeting the needs of homeless women, the Marylebone Project is one of the largest of its type in the UK. The range of services we provide give homeless women practical support, educational opportunities and spiritual space through our chapels, festivals and events in a welcoming and secure environment. This enables them to grow in confidence and self esteem, and to be empowered to make informed choices about their lives and be part of a local community.

The Marylebone Project facilities include:

Bradbury House (1-5 Cosway Street)	Emergency Bed Unit (4 beds)
	Residential Unit (54 beds)
	Valentia Suite (14 beds) (mental health unit)
Women's Day Centre	Advice, assistance, education and activities
Elgood House	Transitional Accommodation (40 beds) with Gym





"I have been living in hostels for four years and been at the Marylebone project for one year. I like the Marylebone Project as they give me a lot of support. My key worker has been great and helps me a lot as my English isn't very good so I find it hard to read letters and call the hospital.

I have made some really good friends within the project and it is very comforting to know I can talk to them and have their support. I am looking at attending the IT courses held at the Day Centre and I have also applied to be a volunteer at the 2012 Olympics. My future plans are to be healthy and to have my own accommodation."

Najwa Ibrahim

Our facilities

Bradbury House

Emergency Bed Unit

The four private, emergency bedrooms in the Bradbury House Emergency Bed Unit provide a secure environment for vulnerable women, many of whom are affected by relationship breakdown, domestic violence and unemployment. Prevention of homelessness is one of the unit's key goals.

Some of those in need of an emergency bed are already homeless and at risk of serious physical, mental or emotional abuse. Others are on the verge of homelessness, and support provided in the unit, can help prevent the descent into long term homelessness or rough sleeping and its associated risks.

Women are given emergency beds for up to ten nights. Toiletries and food are made available and residents are given every opportunity to secure a safer and improved future.

Women with issues such as alcohol or drug abuse, and mental or physical health needs, are referred on for additional, specialist help. Extra assistance is also provided to help identify and claim benefits they may be entitled to.

The help we provide lasts for much longer than ten nights. Residents are put in touch with key agencies and support networks or, where appropriate, are found long term beds within another Marylebone Project facility.

Renata found herself homeless at 48, after being asked to leave the accommodation being provided by the National Asylum Service. Once at Bradbury House, it became clear that she had poorly controlled Non-Insulin Dependent Diabetes and clinical depression, both made worse by her homelessness.

After nearly two years, Renata was successfully resettled in a self-contained studio flat. She is still a familiar face at Bradbury House, regularly visiting the friends she made here. Renata is thriving in her new home, and her health has dramatically improved.

The Emergency Bed Unit is open 7 days a week, 24 hours a day

Our Emergency Beds are used by up to 487 women in need each year

It costs £269 per bed per week to run the Emergency Bed Unit



"I had been homeless for fifteen years before I came to the Marylebone Project on the 5th February 2010. I was first placed in the emergency beds but I am now in my own bedroom within the project. I have made lots of friends since I have been in the project especially Jackie and Helen who have been great and always help me with my personal problems.

My key worker Jas is great and really supportive and I see her twice a week. I have asked Jas to help me with several things and she has referred me to the day centre so I can attend a computer course and creative writing lessons which I'm very excited about.

I have just applied for the council representative position at the project and feel I can best represent the women as I understand the problems they have faced.

I am so grateful to the staff for their help and support and for letting me move into the Marylebone Project as I would still be home on the streets."

Tammy



Our facilities

Bradbury House Residential Unit

The residential unit contains 54 long term beds. The aim of the unit is to deliver safe and secure temporary accommodation, whilst preparing and supporting residents for a move to longer term housing. Most residents are successfully resettled within two years of arrival.

Each resident has a tailored support plan to progress them towards resettlement. Formerly marginalised and isolated women are encouraged to get involved in resident committees and achieve a level of control over their own lives. This change often gives them the confidence to face and address the causes of their vulnerability.

Excellent working links are maintained between Bradbury House Residential Unit and GPs, Westminster Primary Care Trust, Educational Establishments, Drug Counsellors, the Police, Westminster City Council Officers and Community Mental Health Teams. Residents can also take training courses in health and safety, recruitment, personal safety and protection from abuse.



Terri arrived at Bradbury House following a very unsettled period in her life. Following her husband's early death, she returned to London to nurse her ailing parents. After their deaths, she took a live-in job, but her employer became abusive.

At the age of 54, and with nowhere else to turn, Terri found herself living in a shelter for homeless women. Staff were concerned that she wasn't coming to terms with alcohol abuse and budgeting issues, and discreetly provided care and solutions.

Terri is now living independently in a studio flat and holding down a voluntary job which she hopes will develop into full time employment.

Over 140 women are helped each year in the Bradbury House Residential Unit

Residents are resettled within 2 years or less

It costs approximately £375 to set a resident up in their own unfurnished accommodation



"I enjoy working at the Marylebone Project, especially the staff team makes it easy to work here as a volunteer. It is a new experience to work in a female only environment but I like being with women from all different backgrounds and phases of life. What I probably like the most is seeing them moving on knowing their life changed for the better."

Christina Horsch - Volunteer

Our facilities

Valentia Suite (Mental Health Unit)

The team at the Valentia Suite (Mental Health Unit) work closely with specialist external agencies, providing a much needed refuge for homeless women with diagnosed mental health issues. Support plans are tailored to each woman's needs following a initial assessment process. Realistic goals are set to successfully resettle residents back into independent or semi-independent living as quickly as possible.

The Suite contains thirteen long term stay rooms and one emergency or respite room. Residents have 24/7 access to a specialist team, with allocated key workers offering individually tailored support, encouragement and introductions to relevant agencies who can provide additional help.

Women are usually referred to the Suite by Westminster based Community Care coordinators or crisis resolutions teams.

Restoring social and other skills to those who have suffered through mental health issues and homelessness makes a huge difference to each woman's long term resettlement prospects.



Building achievement and confidence

"Before I came here I used to sit alone in my room all of the time. My sickness was bad, and I didn't think that there was anyone out there who could help. When I moved to Marylebone Project I couldn't believe how much support there was and how friendly people were to me.

Now I do things, and I have confidence to go out more. I've received help with my bulimia, which is gradually improving, and I joined the Day Centre, which helped me to get to college and to take exams. I hope that with continued support I can see my course through to the end, which would be a great achievement for me.

With the help of the staff I am building a portfolio of my certificates and achievements. This experience has changed my life. Now I have hope for the future. I know that I can accomplish new things. I feel that doors have been opened for me, and I've been shown that with help and support I can lead a better life. It's brilliant."

S Kama

Our facilities

The Women's Day Centre

Established in 1996, the Women's Day Centre provides assistance and advice on housing, welfare benefits and immigration issues, reducing homelessness, and "the revolving door syndrome" through education and practical support.

Women coming to the Day Centre usually require crisis intervention to get them into first stage accommodation, or tenancy support so they can continue to live independently.

Ongoing tenancy support is critical. There are an increasing number of women who have been resettled, but find it so difficult to manage on their own that they lose their tenancy.

Many women visiting the day centre have been abused and exploited, and may be experiencing issues with drugs, alcohol or mental health problems. The Centre provides them with a safe and secure environment where they can attend advice sessions and use the showers, laundry facility and luggage store.

The Day Centre works in partnership with agencies to deliver an education, career guidance and IT programme. This is done in conjunction with City of Westminster College, Westminster Adult Education Service, St Mungo's Personal Best Programme, Westminster Works and Church Street Library. The function of the education programme is to act as a stepping stone into mainstream education, training, volunteer placement and employment.

Last year over 500 women used the Day Centre facilities. Of those women:

68% were successfully housed into first stage accommodation

33% have required support to sustain their tenancies

39% are refugees

20% have mental health issues

10% are older women

30% accessed our educational programme

18% accessed the UK Online open access sessions

"Working at the Day Centre is an amazing experience for me. I really enjoy spending my time with women and discovering every day different sides of their world.

Art Class is a special moment for them. They can really express their selves in a moment of pure relaxation getting carried away by their deep sensibility which is reflected in original creations. It is also an important moment of participation and sharing where women get much closer to each other working together on the same project. They feel quite motivated and involved in doing art because all they do is simply spend time with themselves and their feelings."

Valentina Ines La Mela – Full-Time Volunteer



"For me, the day centre is a very unique and special place, and working here has enabled me to grow both professionally and personally. I love working in such a multi-cultural environment and meeting people from such varied backgrounds – I feel very privileged to have clients share their precious life stories with me. I particularly enjoy the mix of engaging with clients in formal advice sessions as well as in informal conversation in the drop in area. I am often completely blown away by the strength and courage shown by the women I work with, and find them truly inspiring. I feel very lucky to be part of such a supportive staff team and see them as my 'day centre family!' I thoroughly enjoy what I do and can't think of a more rewarding job."

Sarah Lee

"My name is Gabriella, I am currently living in the Marylebone Project. I have felt very welcomed and happy during my time here. When you live in the Marylebone Project you never feel lonely and you always have somebody to turn to for help, or a piece of advice or just to talk.

I have made a lot of friends and acquaintances in the hostel, who will certainly lend me a hand if I need it.

Living in the Marylebone Project was a good experience for me, although I am away from my family. I have found support, help and stability from my key worker and hostel staff. The project workers have helped me in many ways, and I am now moving into my own accommodation.

I would like to thank everybody at the Marylebone Project for all their help and support they have given to me. I am very grateful to have such a good and caring team around me."

Thank you Gabriella



Our facilities

Elgood House

Elgood/Portman House provides transitional accommodation for 40 women who are between 18-59 years of age. In the past 5 years we have resettled 98 women.

The staff offer advice and practical help in areas such as accessing training, education and employment to enable residents to move back into the wider community.

As Resettlement is the main priority, keyworkers aim to help the women overcome any barriers they face in moving on. These issues are addressed through both one to one and group sessions helping the women to prepare themselves in practical and emotional ways.

The Project has successfully enabled many women to move on through working in partnership with specialist agencies and housing providers. Staff continue to provide follow up support for the first few months after someone has moved on to ensure they are settling into their new environment well.



Homelessness can happen to everyone. Although she had always worked, 50 year old Noreen lost her home as a result of financial difficulties following the death of her husband. After living on the streets and in hostels, the move to a room of her own in Elgood House gave her a stable and secure base. Access to the Women's Day Centre also gave her access to inexpensive meals, social activities and new friends in similar situations.

Noreen rebuilt her life as a result of her stay in Elgood House. Her Key Worker found her a small Marylebone Housing Association flat, and is one of the longest serving members of the Domestic Staff at the Women's Day Centre.



"The day centre plays a very large part in my life. I come here most days, and if I can't make it for whatever reason, I really miss it. I travel quite a distance to come here and there are other day centres nearer to where I live, but the Women's Day Centre is 'the best one'. It's great because I get to sit and chat with my friends over a cup of coffee and a sandwich. The staff create a very warm and welcoming environment and have helped me with any problems I have had - they are very good at what they do. I have encouraged many other women to come to the day centre, as I know that staff will be more than happy to help them too, whatever their problem. I can't wait for the summer programme to start, and I am looking forward to going down to the seaside with staff - it's always a fun day out!"

'God bless all the day centre staff'.

Stella



History

Wilson Carlile founded Church Army in 1882 with a vision of transforming human lives, to bring change to communities, and to make the world a better place. For 128 years Church Army has been working across the UK and Ireland to alleviate people from poverty, addictions and homelessness. The first rescue centre was opened on the Marylebone site in 1889 to help house the needy found by the trainees of its Women's Training College. This founded the official beginning of the Church Army Women's Social Work with the opening of the first laundry home in Marylebone Road in 1891.

Portman House was taken over by Church Army in 1931, and a purpose built "commodious lodging house" for young women, now known as Elgood House, was added in 1937.

At Bradbury House the Emergency Hostel was established in 1968, and upgraded in 1995 to include a much needed Mental Health Unit. A separate Day Centre is now housed in the same building.

The Portman House Trust

The Portman House Trust is a registered Charity and Registered Social Landlord formed in 1932, and whose trustees are the Board of the Church Army. It's objectives are social and mission work amongst women and girls in the Marylebone area.


Church Army

Church Army is about sharing faith through words and action to transform lives by making Jesus famous.



Mary suffered from depression, low self esteem and suicidal feelings as a result of her homelessness. After a year of living on the streets she was referred to Elgood House and started using the Women's Day Centre.

Help and support from staff, plus the learning opportunities that were presented to her, meant that Mary was able to confront her fears and think more positively. She has taken a wide range of courses, has part time work as a cook in a local school and is looking for full time employment so that she can get off welfare benefits.

A black and white photograph of a woman in a gym, wearing an Adidas hoodie and dark pants, stretching her right arm upwards. In the background, there are blurred images of gym equipment like treadmills and a person working out. A yellow, torn-edge text box is overlaid on the right side of the image.

The Marylebone Project Gym inside Elgood House is available to women across the project. It is a fully fitted gym and qualified instructors hold regular weekly sessions. The gym encourages healthy living in Mind, Body and Spirit and is used to provide training and employment opportunities for the women of the project who aspire to enter the fitness industry.

Our stories

Mariola Garcia-Fraile, 32, was desperate and destitute when she arrived at the hostel in September 2007. Initially living in a squat in Hackney, she had battled to avoid descending into drug and alcohol abuse.

After being evicted from the squat, Mariola spent time sleeping rough, but it was an abusive partner that finally made her try to break the cycle she was in and seek help. "My partner was abusing me, he was violent," she said. "I got fed up and decided to try and shout for help – that's when I tried to get out of this mess and do something with my life."

Her cry for help was answered by the Marylebone Project, and she began to rebuild her life as a resident here. She played a major part in setting up the gym, becoming its first qualified instructor.

Mariola thinks organisations like the Marylebone Project are vital to give homeless women the extra support that they need. "All this time my confidence just grew and grew, I wasn't intimidated at all, what I did here helped me so much."

Mariola now lives with her three-month-old baby in London and returns to the gym to provide instruction and encourage to hostel residents.



"Words cannot express my thanks. My daughter was admitted to your hostel with a range of issues. I have to say I was worried, and it was against my better judgement at the time that Janice came to you. Although Janice's first few weeks were daunting, she quickly settled down and I saw her confidence grow in leaps and bounds.

Without your support she simply would not be able to cope and coming to you has proved to be the best move she has ever made toward stable independent living. Words simply cannot express how Janice has grown – you have proved to be a tower of strength for both of us."

A resident's mother

Fundraising at the Marylebone Project

Funding comes from a wide variety of sources including trusts, companies, individuals and statutory providers including Supporting People and Housing Benefit. We remain truly grateful to all those who have made donations and gifts to the Marylebone project, your support is enabling us to make a real difference.

Whilst much of the hostels operating costs are currently covered, every year we must secure around £250,000 for the Women's Day Centre, which provides emergency advice and practical support not easily available elsewhere in a female only environment.

Another urgent area that we are trying to secure funding towards is our emergency bed unit, which provides emergency accommodation for women in desperate housing need. Every day women escaping from domestic violence, financial crisis, sexual exploitation and mental health issues arrive at our door seeking a safe haven and refuge. This service costs over £1,000 a week to run, and we are actively seeking donations towards this area of work.

Throughout the year we also seek donations towards new pieces of work, to refurbish rooms and to purchase new equipment and furniture.

If you are in position to make a financial contribution towards the work of the Marylebone Project, however large or small, we can promise it will be gratefully received and faithfully applied. For more information about supporting our work please contact James Marlow today on 07890 611838 or email j.marlow@churcharmy

Further Information

- If you would like to discuss making a donation, or other ways to support the Marylebone Project
- If you are a funder and would like to visit the project
- If you would like any more information about the Marylebone Project

Please contact James Marlow on 07890 611 838 or email at j.marlow@churcharmy.org.uk

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The Marylebone Project

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