

the society of  
**st James** ➤  
believing in your future

**OUR NEWS 2019**



The work of The Society of St James is generously supported by our local community, individuals, community groups, businesses, local authorities, statutory partners and philanthropic trusts and foundations alike. We would like to thank all of them for their continued support of the important work we do to relieve poverty, sickness, hardship and distress in particular of persons who are homeless, unemployed or who have drug, alcohol or other substance addictions.



GIVING people every opportunity to fulfil their potential is a priority for staff at The Society of St James. Whether on the road to recovery from substance misuse, desistance from offending or independence from homelessness, we want to offer the people we work with choices along that road. We pride ourselves on having staff that are innovative in their approaches and a portfolio of grant-funded and community supported projects that together offer those choices.

We witness the individuals we work with gaining self-efficacy every day through our three social enterprises; Café in the Park, Jamie's Computers and Re-Cycle bikes. Those involved speak of gaining a sense of purpose and belonging through their involvement in these projects.

Our National Lottery Community Funded projects Saints4Sports and Re-Fit represent

our strong partnerships with Saints Foundation and Pompey in the Community. These celebrated projects offer individuals taking part a choice of over 25 different activities to try including football, badminton, gym sessions, table tennis, chess club, boxing & fitness, kick-boxing, fishing, Tai Chi mountain/city biking, self-defense, archery, kayaking, golf, laser tag, climbing, ten-pin bowling, go-karting, lawn bowls, coasteering, survival skills and paddle-boarding. The project also provides routes into education, training and employment.

We believe that no matter what problems the individuals we work with are facing, they all have some strengths and resources from which they can draw on to make positive changes. We believe it is our job at SSJ to help them re-connect with those strengths and resources.

## IMPROVING LIVES FOR THOSE WITH MULTIPLE DISADVANTAGES

### 2018-19

Over  
**5000**  
Individuals  
supported

Over  
**90**  
NVQs  
achieved

Over  
**900**  
Individuals  
engaged in  
sport  
activities

Over  
**60**  
Involved in  
our Social  
Enterprises

## PROVIDING HOMES FOR THOSE WITH A HISTORY OF HOMELESSNESS...

### 2018-19

**683**  
Individuals and  
families  
accommodated

**459**  
bed spaces  
available

### 2017-19

**14**  
New  
properties

**78**  
New units  
worth  
£5.6m

ALL of our bed spaces provide accommodation for formerly homeless and or vulnerable individuals/families, and for many, all other options have been exhausted. The role of the Society of St James must be to provide support and housing but also to be part of a pathway. Sometimes called a "Journey", individuals will need to have the opportunity to address their basic needs such as getting regular meals, getting clean and having some clothes to wear at the start of their journey. Then come medium term challenges such as getting involved in a treatment program, learning to live with an ongoing mental health issue or addressing past traumas.

Access to accommodation is a problem for people at all stages of their recovery journey. The provision of emergency accommodation such as hostels or winter beds are crucial to get people off the streets but the provision of longer term

accommodation is also essential. People need to be able to move out of hostels and move into more independent accommodation, such as a room in a shared house, a bedsit or a flat.

So as well as emergency accommodation, we have been developing more permanent housing. Over the last 2 years we have purchased 14 properties. When they are all refurbished these will create an additional 78 units of accommodation in Southampton, Portsmouth and Aldershot at a cost of £5.6 million. This has been financed by a mixture of grants from Homes England, mortgages and donations we have received. This will represent a 20% increase in the amount of accommodation we own.

Our county is facing a housing crisis which may take a number of years to resolve. SSJ is doing its bit to increase the housing options for our services users and hopefully increase their chances of success in their recovery journeys.



# WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO

## JAMES' STORY

JAMES' parents divorced when he was 4 years old. At around the same age, James was diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome. The effects of this syndrome have had an impact on every stage of his life to this day. He has problems with anger; struggles to maintain what some would perceive as 'normal' relationships and becomes overwhelmed in most social situations.

James' father was abusive to both James and his mother so had little to do with James after this early age. James' mother found the challenges of raising James too much for her; hence for a number of years James was fostered to various foster homes but none of these placements were successful.

At the age of 8 James' Maternal Grandparents came forward to take over James' care. Until the age of 18 these Grandparents were his legal guardians. Unfortunately James'

Grandfather has now died but James is in regular contact with his Grandmother and maintains a healthy relationship with her.

By the time James had reached his twenties he had begun to use recreational drugs such as Cannabis, by the age of 24 James was using intravenous heroin and crack cocaine. James' mother died, an event that when looking back James sees as a spur to his chaotic existence which soon became overwhelming. Over the past 10 years James has at times endured homelessness and resorted to petty crime to pay for his substance use. This behaviour inevitably led to involvement with the Criminal Justice System and an escalation in James' chaotic lifestyle.

Through the courts, James became a service user of SSJ. He was given a Recovery Worker at our Recovery Hub where he had regular support in addressing his substance use. He

was also accepted into SSJ supported housing and encouraged to engage with the ReFit program. Initially James showed limited interest and only attended weekly badminton sessions but as he developed trusting relationships with the ReFit team he has become a regular and dedicated ReFit attendee. James still enjoys the badminton sessions but now attends the Gym three times per week and has attained his Bronze award in Boxing and is well on his way to achieving a GCSE in Boxing.

The support, patience and trust shown to James at ReFit and the wider SSJ team has helped James take control of his own life. James is working hard to gain weight and has taken an interest in food and nutrition. So much so that he now volunteers at the Community Cafe run by



SSJ where he has just won 'Volunteer of the Week'.

For the first time James feels he has agency over his own choices - he would like to move into unsupported housing, wants to pursue his interest in boxing and maybe develop coaching skills and even take part in competitive boxing. He would eventually like to attain a life with no substance use at all, earn a living and help other vulnerable people in his community.

DARRYL'S story, and others like his, are why we at SSJ are determined to increase the availability of permanent housing for those with a history of homelessness.

"I'm 47 years old and 30 of those years have been spent in a cycle of homelessness, substance misuse and prison. 2.5 years ago I was lucky enough to be signposted from prison

to SSJ's North Lane Lodge hostel and where I was given a room. I lost the room however when I was sent back to prison for historic charges. On release I became homeless for 4 months, living on the streets, my substance misuse spiralled out of control and I found it increasingly difficult to integrate into society.

Eventually I was accepted

back into North Lane lodge but I became very angry at life, and was extremely anti-social, getting into fights, was found drunk in the bushes until eventually a community protection order was put in place, I didn't take too kindly to this. My chaotic lifestyle made it difficult for me to adhere to my license agreement at North Lane Lodge and my accommodation was at risk. Despite this, the support staff at North Lane Lodge never gave up on me.

It took being hit by a car to shock me towards change. I realised I and a lot of support staff had put in a lot of work to change my life yet I was putting my accommodation, and more importantly my life, at risk. I was clear on my goals now, I wanted contact with my son and my own front door so that my young son could visit me.

From that point, I worked hard with all the services that were supporting me and was given a chance by The Society of St James to move into shared accommodation. I have done really well here, 9 months clean and felt I was contributing to society by volunteering my time within NHS Recovery. It was

time to seek my own front door but my past wouldn't leave me alone. A 4 year old case came back to haunt me and whilst I wasn't given a prison sentence the sting was a big fine.

Over a 12 month period I was turned down by housing associations 4 times because of my offending and substance misuse history despite a sustained period of abstinence and desistance. The private sector wouldn't give me a chance without upfront deposits, security and guaranteed paid employment. Without my own front door, I cannot have my son to visit. I just want a chance to prove I'm capable of managing a tenancy and want to have my own place to call home.

SSJ's support has been there throughout my journey and they have signposted me to others for additional support. Without their help and support I wouldn't be where I am today."

Since writing this case study, and with SSJ's help, Darryl has now been accepted for his own flat.

At SSJ we believe everyone should have the opportunity to fulfil their potential and have a place to call home.



## DARRYL'S STORY



## TRACY'S STORY

HERE at SSJ we recognise the impact that all staff have on the vulnerable people that we support. Our hostel cooks, maintenance and security teams, back office staff and even contractors all have a part to play in demonstrating positive behaviours to our residents. We focus here on the much loved housekeeping team, led by Tracy Hunt.

Tracy says "We recruit easy going, friendly people into the housekeeping team. With over 30 properties to clean we meet a lot of the service users regularly – they get to know us and we get to know them. I think we bring a level of normality to their lives and always take time to listen to their stories. We never judge! We bring natural, friendly conversation into the house, something that many of the residents haven't experienced for some time.

Don't get me wrong, we see a lot of 'mucky' stuff on a daily basis so the team have to be pretty shock proof! We naturally become invested in each and every one of them and if any of them aren't doing so well, it's upsetting!

As a team we believe every-



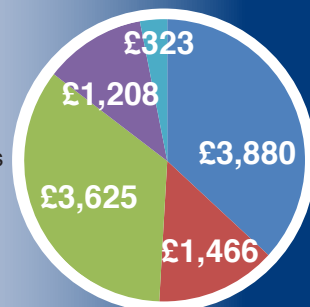
one has a right to live in a clean and safe home and I believe our role is to teach the residents what a nice clean home looks like. Off the streets, many don't have the skills or motivation to keep their bed space clean but as they realise it's nice to live in a clean home and as they start to take pride in their surroundings, their skills improve.

It's the little things that make this job so worthwhile. On first arriving at SSJ's new shared house in Southampton a few months back we were greeted at the door by the new residents. They said "hello girls, nothing for you to do in here but we'd love to show you around". The place was immaculate and seeing the pride on their faces was priceless – they even showed us the garden that they had been working on. 8 weeks on, the house is still immaculate!"

## INCOME 2018/19

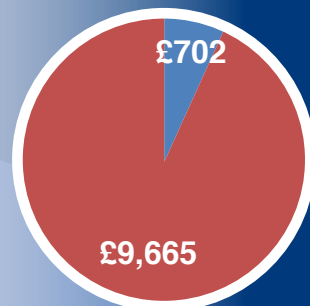
### How the society is funded £000's

- Rents
- Housing related support grants
- Substance misuse grants
- Other grants and donations
- Jamie's Computers



### How the money is spent £000's

- Administration costs and interest
- Resident support, sustenance and outreach



## HOW CAN YOU HELP...?

Find out more about how you can help us at [www.ssj.org.uk/support-us/](http://www.ssj.org.uk/support-us/)

## NEW FOR 2019-20

### NEW SERVICE FOR ROUGH SLEEPERS

WE are delighted to have added a new Southampton City Council funded service to our portfolio for 2019 in the shape of our Supported Lettings service. Coming very close to the increasingly popular 'Housing First' model; the service provides individual support to help those who are homeless or have a history of street homelessness into long term accommodation. The premise of the model is that eradication of rough sleeping starts with secure and affordable long-term housing. Without a fixed address people can find it difficult to get benefits paid, get a bank account and source other types of available help.

The 7 clients benefiting from this new service so far have historically been the 'hardest to house' with one of them having slept rough for best part of 3 years as he couldn't cope

in a hostel environment. Most have multiple and complex issues including mental health, substance misuse and unaddressed past traumas. Support staff say that with the exception of 3 nights, since opening in July 2019 residents have slept in their beds every single night and all are engaging with the support which for this client group is a fantastic outcome.



## FAMILY SUPPORT PROJECT

OUR Family Support Project Manager, Louise, tells us about SSJ's newest project in Portsmouth. "Having worked in alcohol and substance misuse for a number of years, I was delighted to be able to take on the challenge of setting up a new project in Portsmouth to broaden the support available to people facing difficulties with alcohol. My passion for working with families has grown even further in the 6 months that the Family Support Project has been operational as I have watched the team develop meaningful

support options for

children and families. Our Family Workers provide non-judgmental, person-centred sessions with the adults and children they support and we have seen some very positive changes made by families. I hope that the next year sees us working with more families to make meaningful, sustainable change."

The Family Support Project works with families who have been affected by parental alcohol use. We work with the whole family to understand how parents and children have been impacted by someone's drinking and to offer support to make changes to alcohol use; repair relationships within the family and sustain positive changes. We have worked with 35 families, which includes 68 children since we have been operation in March.

One service user recently said "...this so far has had a massive effect on my life and made me more relaxed and comfortable with who I am as a person".

For more information contact: [family.support@ssj.org.uk](mailto:family.support@ssj.org.uk) or call 0800 1380355.



[www.ssj.org.uk](http://www.ssj.org.uk)

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