

# Glass Door Homeless Charity kept doors open throughout the pandemic

PRESS RELEASE: London

For immediate release (5/08/21):

**In a year with many challenges, Glass Door managed to keep their doors open throughout the pandemic and supported more people out of homelessness than ever before.**

The charity's 2020-2021 annual report <https://www.glassdoor.org.uk/annual-review-2021> published this week, tells the story of how staff, partners and volunteers shifted ways of working to allow people experiencing homelessness to continue to find a safe place to stay, to enjoy hot meals and to access advice to move off the streets.

In March 2020, guests of the charity's night shelters were some of the first to be moved into hotels at the start of the government's Everyone In scheme, which ultimately supported 37,500 people into temporary accommodation during the pandemic, according to the government's latest figures. But many people remained on the street and many others became newly homeless, leaving the charity determined to stay open.

*"Our staff knew their support was needed more than ever, and we found ways to adapt. In a short amount of time, we launched several new programmes,"* recalls Lucy Horitz, Glass Door's CEO.



*Photo: Lucy Horitz, Glass Door CEO by [glassdoor.org.uk](https://www.glassdoor.org.uk)*

Over the summer, the charity launched a befriending scheme, handed out mobile phones, and gave out food vouchers to ensure that people could stay connected and could find the food and water they needed. Glass Door adapted, opening a new advice centre in an under-used building close to their Chelsea-based headquarters. Staff met with guests wherever they could to provide advice and support with lost IDs, applications for benefits and the EU Settlement Scheme, housing, jobs and more.

When the government announced in October 2020 that communal night shelters, like the ones Glass Door historically have run, would not be allowed to reopen during the winter, planning was already well under way to open an accommodation project that provided individual rooms for people needing to find a way off the street during the pandemic. 199 individuals found safe a place to stay in these rooms over the winter.

*“Between the end of January and into February, three of our guests did test positive for COVID, but we quickly isolated and supported these guests. It’s great to know we protected people from catching and spreading the virus,”* says Andrew Cozin, a Glass Door caseworker who supported people staying in the accommodation project.



*Photo: Andrew Cozin, Glass Door caseworker by glassdoor.org.uk*

One of the female guests recounted not having taken a shower for two weeks before arriving. When she first arrived, *“I sleep for two days non-stop,”* she says. *“I don’t know how to thank them.”*

The charity also launched a COVID-secure community dinner programme, providing hot sit-down meals in four locations across West London every night. Some guests reported walking two hours for what they said was their only meal of the day. 10,309 meals were served to at least 343 individuals over the course of 22 weeks.

*“Thank you. You’ve touched my heart as well as my tummy,”* said one dinner service guest.

Trained caseworkers were on hand five days a week every week. As a result, 317 individuals were supported to move into longer-term accommodation, more people than in any previous year. Despite the shutting of many sectors of the economy, 47 guests were supported into work. 141 individuals registered with a GP and/or received their vaccinations. 141 people successfully applied to the EU Settlement Scheme before the 30 June 2021 deadline.

The services also improved people’s wellbeing. Guests of the accommodation project reported feeling more optimistic, confident, supported, rested, stable and safe during their stay, according to anonymous surveys filled out by guests of the service.

*“I just want to thank you all for doing this every day and for taking my situation seriously. You’ve helped give me a more positive outlook for the future and it keeps me going,”* said a male guest in his forties.



*photo of male guest of the accommodation project. Photo credit: glassdoor.org.uk*

### **Raising Vital Funds – Sleep Out 2021**

To raise much needed funds Glass Door is hosting another virtual and actual Sleep Out in Duke of York Square, Chelsea on Friday October 1<sup>st</sup>. To register and for more information, see <https://www.glassdoor.org.uk/sleep-out>.

In the coming year, Glass Door plans to reopen both shelters and accommodation in single rooms, all with wrap-around support.

The charity is confident that with the right measures in place based on advice from health experts, the shelters can be run safely in the coming winter.

“We know there will be many people in need of a safe place to stay, especially with the eviction ban, furlough scheme and emergency COVID funding all due to end,” says CEO Lucy Horitz. She adds: “We are hopeful that more government support will be available, but experience tells us there are many who fall between the cracks. We will continue to be there for all those who need our support.”

-ENDS-

For more information, please contact Mikaela Algranati at Glass Door on +44 7565 507556 or email [pressoffice@glassdoor.org.uk](mailto:pressoffice@glassdoor.org.uk).

### **About Glass Door**

Based in London, Glass Door coordinates the UK’s largest network of open-access services for people affected by homelessness. Since 1999, thousands of men and women have found safe shelter and the support needed to leave homelessness behind, thanks to the dedication of thousands of volunteers and partnerships formed with churches and drop-in centres. Glass Door night shelters save lives and its support services help change lives.

Glass Door is a registered charity in England and Wales (1083203) and a registered limited company (3950659). Registered address: 155a Kings Road, London, SW3 5TX.

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**Images**

High resolution images from the report are available here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/zo3ap2pouqppjro/AACes5ZsBGsI7JntICIMIJ2Ha?dl=0>

**Editor's Notes:**

Reopening services: For more information on Glass Door's push to reopen homeless shelters safely, see:

<https://www.glassdoor.org.uk/News/glass-door-calls-for-reopening-of-covid-safe-emergency-shelters>