

SLEEP OUT SUCCESS!

On Friday 9th June, over 30 people gave up their beds for the night to take part in our Big Sleep Out, spending their night sleeping in our car park with no shelter. We may have been lucky with dry and warm weather, but it was certainly not a comfortable night, with the hard ground beneath us and plenty of surrounding sound to keep us awake! (Let us tell you – gulls do not sleep!)



We all felt very grateful that we didn't have to face that night after night and could all return to our comfy beds and warm homes the following morning to catch up on rest. Imagine facing life without that option, or being at risk of losing your home that brings you so much comfort and security. Our wonderful big sleep out participants raised funds to help those that face that trauma, and with that support, Arc will do all we can to act quickly when someone faces homelessness and get help organised.

Despite the sleepless night, we had a great evening thanks to lots of incredible support from local people and businesses:

- We had a great line up of live music from local artists: Luis Martelo Trumpeter, Take Two, Ben from The Atomic Youth, Emily Jean Vocalist and Sam Cockram.
- The lovely team at Space College lent us their equipment so we could all enjoy the music across the car park!
- RH Fibreboard kindly donated cardboard to sleep on, which doesn't sound very comfy but it really does make a difference!
- We were lucky to be treated to delicious food provided by Loafers (Bath Place, Taunton) and COOK, alongside cakes made by our kitchen team.



- Crescent Funeral Services donated the tea and coffee supplies which were appreciated all night - but especially the following morning!
- JBL Creative joined us for the evening and captured some amazing video and photo content which we can't wait to share with you all - stay tuned.
- AC Security South West kept us safe all night and kept watch whilst we tried to sleep!
- The Rapid Relief Team jumped into action at 6am and provided our wonderful participants with a very much needed cooked breakfast.



Of course, a HUGE thank you goes to the amazing people who took part and fundraised and in doing so have made such a difference to those affected by homelessness.

Couldn't take part in the Big Sleep Out this year? Not to worry - it's an annual event and we can't wait to see lots of you at June 2024's sleep out! Or perhaps you want to host your own Big Sleep Out in your garden? Get in touch for more info! rhather@arcinspire.co.uk / 01823 271326





Michael tells us how ARC helped him take steps in the right direction!

"I was living up north in May 2021 when my mental health started to deteriorate, things were not going well and I was not in a great place mentally, and one day I just had enough so I got on a train, travelled to Scotland and started walking around the UK.

I literally walked from Scotland down to the West Country and ended up in Taunton. I found Open Door when I first arrived here, and they provided me with a cup of tea and some hot food. I had spent pretty much a year wandering around Somerset & Devon, but I always ended up coming back to Taunton. I got to know some of the Volunteers at Open Door and one day after walking thousands of miles, freezing myself stupid and getting through so many pairs of boots I decided it was time to stop.

I went into Open Door and said 'right I'm ready, what do I need to do to make some changes?' They put me in touch with the Outreach Team who put me in touch with Arc. I had an interview with Karen and Sherri from the Housing Support Team, and they found me a place in Lindley House the next day. That was the start of rebuilding my life. I had existed for a year wandering around, but it wasn't a life, it was time to start getting on with life.

Things have been fantastic since then, I moved out of Lindley into a satellite property in March and have stopped existing for today and started thinking about tomorrow. With Karen's help I have set up a Homefinder account, started bidding for places and have even got myself a part time job opposite my house, everything is really positive. I now feel confident enough to get my own place again and start looking for my dream job.

Walking really helped with my mental health, I saw some amazing places and met some incredible people but the organisations here in Taunton really helped me. I love all of Somerset and Devon but here in Taunton I had access to services that provided me with the help and support I needed.

The whole package here at Arc is brilliant. I'm completely passionate about steam trains, I'm a train nerd and after a passing comment to my support worker Karen, she decided to do something about it. A few days later she had arranged a ticket for me to travel on the GWSR from Minehead to Blue Anchor on my Birthday. I really, really enjoyed it and it was all thanks to donations that I was able to have that experience. It was a lovely thing to be given that opportunity and I had a brilliant day out.

Just knowing that if I need anything I can just text or ring Karen and she will work her magic. I could have ended up anywhere but the services in Taunton are amazing. The whole experience of working with Arc has been so simple and easy and every time a problem has arisen a solution has been found. They have really helped me focus and with their support behind me it has given me the confidence to go out and do things for myself which has helped me take another step down the road.

Arc have been great!"



Supporting Rough Sleepers in Sedgemoor



We would like to introduce Amy Bridges & Richard Hole who joined our team here at ARC in April and are already making a positive impact on the streets of Sedgemoor. Here they tell their story....

“We start work every morning at 7.00am at our office in Bridgwater and after checking emails to see if there have been any new reports of people sleeping rough via Street Link or the public, we take to the streets. We begin our day by visiting areas that are already known to us, checking in and taking bottles of water and suncream to people we know and keeping our eyes out for anyone that we think may be a new rough sleeper.

Once we have covered Bridgwater we head to Burnham-on-sea and our checks include the high street, fields, graveyards, car parks and woodlands. We certainly cover a lot of miles some days and we always go out 5 days a week despite the weather!

This normally takes us until 9.00am and after we have dealt with all the relevant paperwork we head over to Westfield United Reformed Church where we offer a drop-in service from 9.30am until 11.30am. Via the wonderful Westfield Street Café initiative rough sleepers can access food, shower and laundry facilities and we are on hand to offer support & advice, to address their housing issues and assess everyone for suitable accommodation and other services they may need.

Every day is different, and we never know how many people may drop- in, but we try our best to engage with everyone and encourage them to drop- in and see us. We are here to listen, help people access accommodation, get them off the streets and break the cycle of street homeless. Some days can be really tough, but the impact we are making and the relationships we are building outweighs those difficult days... our job is so rewarding! Matthew is a recent success story of ours as we found him sleeping in a tent in a field with no other personal items not even a sleeping bag and he is now safe and secure in local accommodation.”

We would like to congratulate Amy and Rich on how quickly they have adapted to their new role and the positive impact they have made in such a short space of time. If you would like to make a donation to directly help the services offered by the Outreach Team, please contact us at giving@arcinspire.co.uk. All donations will go towards new sleeping bags, roll mats and suncream which are all desperately needed by the team. If you are concerned about a rough sleeper, please contact Streetlink at <https://www.streetlink.org.uk/>

HOMELESS LINK EXCELLENCE AWARDS



We are so excited and incredibly proud to announce that our social enterprise, Crescent Cleaning Services, has been shortlisted in Homeless Link's Excellence Awards under the Social Enterprise of the Year category.

Homeless Link are the national membership charity for organisations working directly with people who become homeless in England. They host annual Excellence Awards to 'highlight the innovative and impactful work happening across the sector'. Speaking of the awards on their website, Homeless Link say: "This year, as homelessness organisations tackle a soar in demand and navigate cuts to funding, it feels more important than ever to highlight the tireless and inspirational work going on across the country to ensure people have a place to call home and the support they need to keep it."

Our Social Enterprise Manager, Jordan Caanter, says "We are all so pleased to have been shortlisted by Homeless Link in their Social Enterprise of the Year award, especially considering the size and calibre of the other nominees. Personally it is very uplifting to see how quickly and by how much CCS has grown and take great pride in the fact of CCS giving people a place to better themselves. None of this would have been possible without Arc having faith in the project and the support that everyone in Arc has given CCS. Most importantly, CCS would not have succeeded so far if it wasn't for the employees. Their hard work and the support they give to Arc clients, volunteers and new employees is why we are here, so thank you all."

The judging panel will be meeting at the end of June with the winners announced in early July. All other organisations shortlisted alongside us are doing incredible work and we're honoured to be up against them – but of course we're secretly hoping for the winning spot! If you want to see the list of short listers and more news on the awards, visit: <https://homeless.org.uk/news/excellence-awards-2023-shortlist-announced/>

Partnership working making a positive impact!

You may know that in 2022, we launched our very own well-being hub, based at 'The Reach Centre' at the back of our hostel, Lindley House. This was an extension of our in-house GP Surgery, which has been a huge benefit to our clients, enabling them to easily access healthcare with a team they can build trusting relationships with.

The well-being hub was created to extend this offering beyond physical health needs and introduce other areas that would support our clients. This hub is now home to our fantastic volunteer counsellors who provide a free confidential counselling service for those in Arc's accommodation. As you can imagine, this support has been invaluable.

When creating our well-being hub, we always had a partnership working approach in mind. There are many brilliant organisations providing support in different areas which are helpful for our client group and so bringing those services to an accessible and friendly hub is a win-win!

We're so pleased to have grown in this area over the past few months and our hub is now offering so much, such as:

Smokefree Somerset are providing regular sessions to support our clients to stop smoking. The fantastic team at **The Nelson Trust** use our well-being hub as a base often to provide holistic, trauma-informed support to Women with multiple disadvantage and complex needs.

Somerset Drug and Alcohol Service (SDAS) are hosting fortnightly drop ins at our hub to talk about substance use and offer advice.

Second Step, a mental health charity, are offering 'creative spaces' workshops to help our clients with escapism, and exploring their creative side.



We'd like to say welcome and thank you to those services joining us in providing great support to those struggling with homelessness in Somerset. We hope to continue growing this work so that many support needs are met.



THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS!

From the 1st – 7th June, we celebrated Volunteers Week! Volunteers are invaluable to our work at Arc and we feel very lucky to have a great group of them in varying roles, making a huge difference to those experiencing homelessness in Somerset. From counsellors, to buddies, food collectors and more, we're so grateful for the hours they kindly donate. We were pleased to host a gathering and thank you event for our volunteers on a sunny Wednesday afternoon. The very least we could do for all their hard work!

If you're interested in volunteering for Arc, we have a number of opportunities available. Please visit our website www.arcinspire.co.uk/volunteering or get in touch with Emma, our Volunteer Coordinator on edunn@arcinspire.co.uk

