

## Supporter email journey – 12 case studies

A selection from the stories of 12 amazing young people who have experienced homelessness, written for a leading youth homelessness charity in partnership with the Tin Can Collective. This work was written to a creative brief set by the agency and not directly with a client charity, so charity name and names of beneficiaries have been removed, and credit for the creative brief goes to the great people at Tin Can. If you require more information, please get in touch.

Subject line	Email copy
Chapter #1: R's on her way to University	<p data-bbox="824 619 1753 659"><b>Thanks to gifts like yours, a bright future is waiting for R.</b></p> <p data-bbox="824 695 1951 762">We all need a safe and stable place to call home. And R had one - until she was turfed out of her house along with her mother and siblings.</p> <p data-bbox="824 799 1946 866">R's father, who owned their family home, was mostly absent from their lives. Then one day, he wrote to tell them that he was selling the house and they needed to leave.</p> <p data-bbox="824 903 1933 1003">That letter changed everything. R's mother couldn't afford another place to live, and while she had settled status in the UK and the right to work, she and her children weren't entitled to any benefits or support to help them respond to this sudden shock.</p> <p data-bbox="824 1040 1924 1179">With the entire family scrambling for places to stay, R attempted to get housing support but was told the local authority couldn't offer her a place to stay. This dented her self-esteem; "to know that the council wasn't willing to help, just felt like I was a nobody", she said.</p> <p data-bbox="824 1216 1942 1283">R had nowhere to go and slept rough for a few days. "It was lonely. It was just so dark and cold. That's when I got in touch with [the charity]."</p>

R was referred to our emergency accommodation service for young people with experience of rough sleeping in London, where she was offered a safe and secure place to stay.

“I got given my own room with an actual bed. Everything was so clean. I could organise all my stuff. I prepared all my toiletries. I got all my clothes out. I just felt like I could settle in.” She added, “It felt too good to be true. But it was the reality I stepped into because of [the charity].”

Having a place to call her own and the support of people who cared about her success also gave R the space and the hope to start thinking about what she wanted to do with her life - apply for a PhD.

“Having this room felt like having an office. I was able to study here and make my applications. I even had my interviews with Oxford and Cambridge in this room. I could not do that on the streets. I don’t think I’d even have the drive to do that.”

R has now been accepted at the University of Cambridge and is on the waiting list for Oxford. As she waits to start her PhD, [the charity] has supported R to move to peer-led housing – long-term affordable homes for young people with low support needs. Housemates in our peer-led housing communities understand one another’s life experiences and provide each other with amazing support and encouragement.

Learn more about Peer Led Housing {BUTTON}

At every stage in her journey [the charity] was able to provide R with tailored support to reach her goals. From providing immediate secure accommodation to getting back into education, [the charity]’s caring staff were a trusted presence on R’s journey and have stayed in touch along the way, celebrating her successes and helping her rebuild her confidence.

“[the charity] has met my needs in different ways,” she says. “I don’t know how I would have done it without the support, help, and people who genuinely care. Everything really stems from being at [the charity].”

	<p>Due to circumstances entirely out of R’s control, her bright future could have been taken away from her. Now, nothing is holding her back from the next amazing chapter of her life. With your generous support, we are helping more young people like R rewrite their futures.</p> <p>PS Keep an eye out for next month’s email – you’ll hear how Z is using her experiences in prison to help other young people get out and stay out of crime.</p> <p>Pull quote: “It felt too good to be true. But it was the reality I stepped into, because of [the charity].”</p>
<p>Chapter #3: Music gave J an outlet</p>	<p>Thanks to gifts like yours, J is healing through music – and helping others do the same.</p> <p>J has lived by himself since his late teens. He grew up around gang violence and felt pressure to be part of it, but he always found an outlet in music.</p> <p>Finally, at age 19, J got a flat through his local authority and began studying and working at his local college. By the time he was 22 he was working on his first album and studying film-making. When an opportunity came up to move to Barcelona to direct a film and manage a band, he grabbed it.</p> <p>However, J’s family was going through a tough time. His granddad was receiving treatment for cancer, one of his sisters was battling severe mental health challenges and was suicidal and his other sister had just given birth. So J returned to the UK to be closer to his family. “I felt disconnected, so I thought I needed to return to England.”</p> <p>But returning to the UK was tough. “I struggled to integrate back into the system. I was in debt with the council from before I left, so I couldn’t get housing from them. I didn’t</p>

have family I could stay with. I didn't have savings." J's father, who struggles with alcohol addiction and mental illness, in J's words, "was just never really there."

Without a safety net, J stayed on friends' sofas for a couple of months, but then he learned about [the charity] and their [emergency provision] service. [emergency provision] provides emergency accommodation for young people at risk of homelessness through specially trained volunteer hosts.

Find out more about [emergency provision] {BUTTON}

J stayed with [emergency provision] hosts for over a month. "I'm grateful for [emergency provision]. I stayed with five different families, night to night."

But J had trouble finding a longer-term solution. "I still couldn't get a place to live because I couldn't get a guarantor. I had money but couldn't find anywhere to live. I even found some nice landlords, who seemed willing, but they did a check on me and they weren't willing to take me, even though I could pay two or three months' rent up front."

So [the charity] provided J with somewhere to live until the school year began. "It kept me going until I started university. Without that, I don't know what I would have done."

Something that helps J make sense of what he's been through is music. "Coming from a background of poverty, there were many things I didn't have." J reflects. "I feel like I'm forever trying to get out of that. Writing music is everything. I don't know if I'd be alive if I didn't write music."

J now wants to offer other people going through difficult challenges a space for creative expression. "I don't know if I'd be alive if I didn't write music. So if I can help other people understand that that's an outlet for their problems, then that's what I want to do."

	<p>[the charity] also supported J in getting a grant from a charity for young musicians. Thank you for your ongoing support and for helping vulnerable young people like J to rewrite their own stories.</p> <p>PS Next month, you'll hear how we helped J get back on his feet after losing his job during Covid.</p> <p>Pull quote: "When no one else would rent to me, I ended up taking a [the charity] flat for the summer. It kept me going until I started university. Without that, I don't know what I would have done."</p>
Subject line: Chapter #6: From care leaver to firefighter	<p>Thanks to gifts like yours, firefighter-in-training C has a safe place to stay.</p> <p>When C left the care system at 18, he worked hard to set himself up for success but found things tough.</p> <p>After moving into a council flat, he was only just scraping by on benefits. Soon, he found a full-time job as a labourer. The work was very demanding; "I was travelling from Oldham to Bury every day," he says, "getting up at 6am, getting to work for seven, working until half past four."</p> <p>However, when the rent on his flat went up he could no longer afford to live there. Faced with an impossible choice – his home or his livelihood - he gave up his flat. "I thought the job was more important, so I left my flat. That's when I became homeless."</p> <p>C couch-surfed and stayed with various friends, making do for about four months, but it wasn't a long-term solution. "As much as [your mates] have your best interests at heart, they get a bit sick of you. Eventually, you've used up all your options."</p> <p>At this point, the lack of security seriously affected C's mental health. He felt depressed, which made it impossible to work. "My employer laid me off, which meant I</p>

had to go back on benefits, which made the situation more difficult. It's like a snowball effect."

C found out about [the charity] through his local housing group. We introduced him to [emergency provision] – our network of volunteer hosts that provide an emergency place to stay for young people at risk of homelessness.

At first, C was unsure about staying with a volunteer host. "I was very apprehensive", he says, "because you're going to someone's house, you've never met them before. Then I met my [emergency provision] host, who helped me settle in quickly. Such a lovely woman!"

After two weeks of staying with volunteer hosts, [the charity] helped C find his own flat, where he remained for a year and a half. Having a safe and secure place to live allowed C to focus on learning new skills. He volunteered full-time with the Fire Service, and when a permanent role came up, C applied – and got the job.

Button: Become a volunteer [emergency provision] host

C is excited to build on his remarkable progress. "Ever since I was a little boy, I wanted to be a paramedic or a firefighter. Firefighting is not just about rescuing people; it's also about getting involved with your community and supporting people who have been in the same situations as yourself."

"My next step is to go for full-time firefighter, and I need to have my GCSE Maths and English to do that. At [the charity], I was told about a grant I could apply for, for education purposes. So I went for the grant to get some private tutoring, and I got the full amount - thanks to [the charity]."

Firmly back on his feet, the future's looking bright for C. "I'm feeling good. The future is good, hopefully." With your help, we can be there for every young person who needs us, helping them put homelessness behind them and start a new chapter.

	<p>PS Next month, you'll hear how giving K some good advice and the perfect interview outfit helped her land a great job in the Civil Service.</p> <p><b>Pull quote:</b> "Firefighting is not just about rescuing people; it's also about getting involved with your community and supporting people who have been in the same situations as yourself."</p>
<p>Chapter #8: X can be her true self now.</p>	<p><b>Thanks to gifts like yours, X has a safe space to heal from her past and create her own future</b></p> <p>The path that brought X to [the charity] was tough and often traumatic.</p> <p>Growing up in Trinidad, X had a disruptive family life. Aged 14 she moved to the UK with her dad and brothers, and they lived with her step-mum in East London for a while, but when she kicked them all out, they moved into a hostel.</p> <p>At the time, X had just come out as trans. While living in that hostel, she experienced both transphobic and racist abuse. After a few months, her dad got a new place to live, but she experienced the same transphobia from her brothers and dad, and eventually, with her mental health being severely affected, she moved out.</p> <p>X found a place to live with some friends, but a few years later, they had a falling out and she found herself homeless again.</p> <p>After that X slept rough for a couple of months. "Due to certain traumas, it was very hard for me", she says. "I was scared that something would happen again. Living on the street, stuff like that can happen, so many people take advantage of you, sometimes you have to do stuff just to get food or just to get water. It was just a really rough time which I wouldn't wish on anyone."</p> <p>That's when another youth charity referred X to our emergency accommodation in London, [service]. "They said there's a hostel for young people and there's a lot of</p>

	<p>queer people as well.” X says. “I was terrified of going to another hostel. But every staff member of [the charity] has helped me. They’ve restored my trust in people.”</p> <p>The staff at the hostel offered X encouragement and practical support. “It was really late when I arrived. Staff members helped me settle in and showed me to my room. They were really nice.” Over the next few months, they helped X get to appointments, supported her through a difficult court case and helped her to express her feelings through art.</p> <p>“They’ve given me a place to do my art. We found a desk for me to work on. They helped me with money for the spray paints. Whenever staff come into my room, they love looking at my art.”</p> <p>Button: Learn about [service]</p> <p>X is taking the time to heal her mental health, and is keen to get back to bartending when she feels able. “Eventually I want to open up my own Caribbean bar,” she says. “A Trinidadian style bar with proper traditional west-Indian food and traditional drinks. A lot of rum-based drinks!”</p> <p>Every young person deserves to be treated with compassion and respect. Many young people who have found themselves homeless have experienced trauma along the way. With your support, we can walk side by side with them, offering kindness, help and understanding as they recover their mental health and rewrite their future.</p> <p>Pull quote: “I’m a lot more accepting now that some people actually want to help me and are not going to leave me when things get hard.” X says. “Honestly, I don’t know where I would be without [the charity].”</p>
Chapter #11: J has found his path	Thanks to gifts like yours, J is rebuilding his mental health and starting to dream big again.



	<p>J has been in care since he was two years old. In his teens, he started to struggle with his mental health.</p> <p>J has bipolar disorder and struggled with suicidal thoughts and self-harm. He used hard drugs to try to cope, which put pressure on his relationship with his foster parents.</p> <p>J's foster parents also didn't accept J's bisexuality. "I didn't understand my own sexuality, and I couldn't express myself, especially around my family." He says. "They didn't really approve of it because of their views, so that was a difficult thing to cope with."</p> <p>One day, J's foster parents woke him up and told him he had to leave that day. "I stayed in my mate's mum's shed, in the garden, for the night. I remember it was freezing as well, because it was winter."</p> <p>J was homeless for about a year. When he couldn't find a sofa to crash on, J spent nights on the street. "That was the worst experience I ever had. There was this park with railway arches. I used to go over there with a sleeping bag. But I also used to just walk about, because I couldn't sleep, and it was terrifying. I saw people get battered on the street. It was very lonely."</p> <p>J picked up cash-in-hand work whenever he could. "I was a bingo caller in South Wales. I worked in a bookie on the side. I worked as a builder. I worked on a construction site. And then I got into retail when I came back to Manchester."</p> <p>Eventually, J heard about [emergency provision]. "My first night with [emergency provision], it was one of the best experiences I've ever had. They took me down, introduced me to the host and there was already cooked food on the table."</p> <p>J loved talking to his host, who gave J the hope he needed that things could get better. "I spent about two and a half hours chatting her ears off. That's when I realised that there's light at the end of the tunnel, that I want to go forward now."</p>
--	---

J lived with [emergency provision] hosts on and off for several months through the pandemic. He stayed with one host for three months. Here, J got the space he needed to recover his mental health. "I was in a beautiful location, away from the city, which was good, because then the temptation wasn't there to go and see my friends. My mental health improved enormously and it's stayed positive since then."

J now lives in a houseshare, and is part of our Pathfinders support project, which guides young people through the housing system to help them find a safe place to live. His support worker met up with J regularly for coffee and offered him a listening ear and other practical support to aid his job hunt, like getting an ID.

Pull quote: "Without [the charity]'s help, I wouldn't be here today. I was so bad on the drugs, on the alcohol, with my mental health, I wouldn't have survived without this help."

Button – Pathfinders

J is taking things day by day, but he's started to believe that he can achieve whatever he wants in life. "I've got a bucket list. I want to swim with Great White sharks, I want to travel. So, I've got the essentials now, and I just need to do the steps to get to where I want to be."

J's story testifies to the impact that caring support can have. Thanks to your generosity, we can be there for more young people like J, giving them what they need to be safe today, and helping them imagine a better future for themselves tomorrow.

PS Next month, you'll hear about C, who is using her experiences to become a mentor for other young people. You'll also learn more about your next chapter with [the charity]. Don't miss it!

Chapter #12: your next chapter with [the charity]

Thanks to support from people like you, C used her own tough experiences to mentor other young people, helping them rewrite their stories.

C was 19 when her parents kicked her out.

She had been a happy and confident person who enjoyed school, but at age 17 she began struggling with her mental health. "That's when it all went downhill. I had anorexia. Then I had depression within that. Two months before getting kicked out, I was admitted to the mental ward and diagnosed with Borderline Personality Disorder."

Struggling to make sense of what she was going through, C tried to find ways to escape. "I used weed to numb it. But, it didn't help at all. I robbed from my own family to pay for it."

"After my parents found out about me robbing them, I had a day to get out. I was sofa surfing for a week and a half until I thought, 'I need my own space'." C was put in touch with a hostel where she could stay, and she lived in hostels for around 18 months.

C had a roof over her head, but she was still struggling with poor mental health and often considered suicide. "I was lost. I just wanted to numb everything with drugs. I was a girl on benefits with no job prospects. I just wanted love, but I didn't love myself. I made a plan to overdose, but I thought, 'It's not fair on my mum'. I decided to live for her, for as long as I could."

Through a community outreach programme, C found her [the charity] support worker, Alan. C and Alan worked together for two years. "He made me see the light again in my life." says C. "He believed in me. I could open up to him. He never judged me, whatever I said."

Alongside giving C a listening ear, Alan offered simple, practical support to help her achieve her goals. "When you have depression, it's hard to go to appointments, get

out of the house and stuff”, C says. “[Alan] helped me with applications or my benefits, or he’d take me to the benefits office and go into the city with me.”

Alan also supported C as she worked through her anorexia. “Alan got me a gym pass. I got positive role models that were eating and were fit. I started thinking not of calories, but about nutrition.”

It was Alan’s caring support that inspired C to become a mentor herself. “Alan was there when I needed him. So now, I want to be someone’s Alan!” she says.

C has been volunteering as a mentor at [the charity] for over a year. “I never thought I’d get better again, but I finally got there. So it’s nice to give back and give people hope.”

C’s experiences as a mentor have also helped her decide on her next steps. “I’ve got a counselling qualification, some coaching experience. I won an award. And giving back helped me; it boosted my confidence. So I’ve started applying for paid jobs now, in support roles.”

Thanks to you, we also helped support C to bid on a council flat, where she has lived for three years now. “It’s one bed, all to myself. I got a little dog when I moved in. It’s quite near my mum’s house. Things are better with my mum now. We speak every day.”

Your amazing support is helping us support young people like C throughout their journey. Homelessness can affect young people on every level – but with a tailored package of support delivered by people who truly care, they can start a new chapter in their lives.

### Your next chapter with [the charity]

Over the past year we’ve told you about twelve remarkable young people who have rewritten their stories with [the charity]’s help. We’re so grateful for your support, and can’t wait to step into the next chapter with you. So, the next time you hear from us, it

will be our regular newsletter where we will keep you posted on everything your generous support is helping us to achieve.

Button: Read our recap

**Bonus ending! – increased gift ask**

**If you increase your monthly gift today you'll help even more young people leave homelessness behind. Click the button to up your monthly donation in three easy steps.**

**Button: I'll increase my monthly gift**

Pull quote: “[Alan] made me see the light again in my life. Now, I want to be someone’s Alan!”