

[cens4homeless.org.uk](https://cens4homeless.org.uk)



Colchester Engagement & Next Steps

# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2022-2023

Report of the Trustees and Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

# MISSION STATEMENT

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The objects of Colchester Engagement & Next Steps which are set out in the Articles of Association of the company are as follows:

(for) the relief of poverty by the provision of emergency and other accommodation advice and assistance for persons who are deemed homeless and are in need of such accommodation, advice or assistance.

# WITH SPECIAL THANKS

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to our supporters for their continued backing



HAT Projects

LANSWOOD



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## Our Trustees

### The trustees in 2022-2023

Miss Alison Lovesee (Chair)

Mr Gerrard O'Driscoll (Treasurer)

Miss Victoria Masters

Mr Ray Ricks

Miss Emily Seddon (Appointed January 2021)

Mr Pete Newell (Appointed December 2021)

Miss Faye Steady (Appointed March 2023)

Clare Heyes (Clerk)

## Registered Office

39-41 Alexandra Road  
Colchester  
Essex CO3 3DF

## Registered Company No.

02475258 (England & Wales)

## Registered Charity No.

803328

## Independent Examiner

Haines Watts  
Town Wall House  
4 Balcerne Hill  
Colchester CO3 3AD

# CHAIRS

## REPORT 22 - 23

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The Trustees are delighted with the progress made over the last 12 months we really feel as though CENS is back into 'Business as usual' after the successful transformation of the building and provision of enhanced facilities. Our services have been in more demand than ever enabling us to support even more people to realise their potential on a safer pathway.

We were very keen to 'show off' our improvements and held an Open Day in September, this was so well attended that we were full to the rafters and spilling out into the garden as everyone including agencies, ex-residents, staff, donors the Bishop and Mayor came to see and hear more about our journey and gain a further insight into our project and what we do so well.

Over the last year with the support of a dedicated Trustee and enthusiastic staff we have focused on raising our profile within the community through social media which has proved key in supporting our fundraising initiatives. We once again launched March 4 CENS, a walking challenge which attracted over 60 Participants, pounding the streets in CENS vest tops and raising over £8000.

Our 'Move-on' accommodation, Al's Annexe has continued to meet such positive outcomes for those who are ready to live more independently but can't rent privately, we bridge the gap between the shelter and full independence but our residents still having the team on-hand for any queries or support they may need.

So as for the next 12 months we are busy forward planning our strategic direction of travel and how to continue to grow our offer to support the homeless within our community and enable our residents to make life changing improvements to enable enhanced wellbeing pathways

All of this is only made possible by the incredible staff team at CENS, as Chair and on behalf of the Trustees I would like to thank them all for their continued hard work, tenacity and dedication to the project and for them to be credited for our success.

**Alison Lovesee**  
Chair





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**Our services have been in more demand than ever enabling us to support even more people to realise their potential on a safer pathway”**



# MANAGERS

## REPORT

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Welcome everyone to our First open AGM since pre-pandemic. You will note that we have had a change of name... after so many years of being Colchester Night Shelter we have moved on and we are now “Colchester Engagement & Next Steps” or “CENS” if you prefer. We felt that it was a good opportunity to come back from our closure with a name that reflects what we do more aptly. We are much more than a bed for a night and this report will explain what our work encompasses.

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**I would like to thank you all for believing in us and for continuing to truly understand and support the work we do”**

This year's report is far less sombre in its tone as we have, against all odds, re-opened and are back offering support and accommodation to the homeless community. We were fortunate enough to secure funding from the Community Lottery Fund, Catalyst Colchester and Essex County Council to refurbish our 20 bed Night Shelter (2 single rooms and 9 twin rooms) into a 15 single bedrooms with en-suites.

### **Just to recap on our journey over the last few years...**

Since our closure at the beginning of the pandemic and the uncertainty we were facing we decided to re-think the project and what was required of us to ensure we future proofed ourselves so that we would never be forced to close again. We pushed on and gathered momentum to design the new project, secure much needed funding, endure the arduous tender process through our fantastic architect, Mark Morgans at Petro Designs, commenced works on the refurbishment and completed it within 6 months!

I am immensely proud of what has been achieved as we have managed to provide people with their own room and ensuite! How we managed to get all that plumbing in I will never know but it now looks like the project we should have always had, and our residents deserved. Our new Health & Wellbeing room is being utilised and we now provide holistic treatments to the people staying with us.

We opened in July 2021 but as this is our first AGM as CENS this report will also celebrate some of our achievements over the last 2 years. I would like to thank you all for believing in us and for continuing to truly understand and support the work we do and allowing us to continue that work, most importantly.

Our previous staff applied for their jobs back and upon their re-employment the real building blocks to the shelter and the foundation of our work felt complete. Without their support and dedication our project simply would fail to exist. I am thankful for them every day for the good they bring to CENS and the joy they bring on what can be people's darkest moments.

In this reporting year we admitted 102 people and offered 4,598 bed nights. We ran at 84.2% capacity. Our planned move on outcomes have been amazing sitting at 63% even with a decrease in our staff team, this is testament to the hard work all our staff put into supporting the people that stay with us. Our average length of stay was 43 nights so despite the long waiting lists that providers operate we are doing a fantastic job in moving people on positively and opening up bed spaces for those that need our service. Our ethos of meeting people half way remains the same but they too must also engage and be willing and open to the changes they must make. We certainly do not enable and facilitate behaviours and we stand by our tried and tested successful drug and alcohol policy. People feel safe and supported in

our environment and the testing is welcomed both by those with addictions and those without. We do not punish relapses; instead we support, refer and allow the individual to take one step at a time. Some providers request that we continue to drug test our resident when they have moved into their new accommodation because it is recognised and accepted that the client needs this for their own peace of mind, to function in society and to sustain their tenancies. If a £10 drug test or a 13p breath test is what people ask for in order to live their lives then it is a very small price to pay. The alternative is a very expensive option of relapse, eviction and back on the merry-go-round of homelessness. We are happy to foot this expense for all whom require it after all it is not taking away their rights it is giving them the right to live, to progress, to be happy, to move on... Everyone deserves these rights and we will continue to support those people to live more independently and substance free.

This report is full to the brim of exciting news and stories highlighting our brilliant staff team, our volunteers and most importantly our residents and to reflect on the work that has been carried out to support the most vulnerable in our society.

Thank you once again for your contributions in helping those less fortunate and for your unwavering belief in our services.

**Marina Woodrow-Walmsley**  
**Manager**

# SOCIAL & DIGITAL MEDIA

## UPDATE

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In 2020, during lockdown, when the shelter was temporarily closed for refurbishment, we took the opportunity to redesign and update the website and review our social media strategy.

The website, although basic, contained most of the relevant information. However, it had few images, the language was formal and more importantly, no regular news content was being uploaded. The News Page is the most important part of the website as it is the area where we can keep the content fresh and relevant, which in turn improves our Google ranking.

### Website Development 2021 - Present

**We identified 2 key audiences:**

**Audience 1.** Supporters/potential supporters. The objective here was to educate, inform and inspire, thereby increasing loyalty and ultimately donations.

**Audience 2.** People who have found themselves homeless. The objective here was to offer information, practical advice and friendly reassurance.

Based on these 2 very diverse audiences we developed 2 main areas to the website:

- 1. Content targeting supporters** – About, Get Involved, Contact, Donate.
- 2. The Homeless Hub** – a curated collection of content specifically targeted to people who are homeless.

The content was all new and written with an authoritative yet friendly tone, with more images and more interactive elements. We included a pop-up on the landing page for The Homeless Hub, rolling banners to take the audience to other areas of the site and regular redirects to the Donate Page.

### Social Media Development 2021 - Present

Although we had a regular following on Facebook, the content was not planned, targeted or regular. There were also no calls to action – just simple

posts which achieved an average number of likes.

Our objective from 2021 was to post more regularly to increase reach, to link the Facebook content to our digital content where possible, and to increase the numbers of calls to action – encourage people to comment, share, click through to the website and donate.

Our content is now a diverse mix of light-hearted stories and pictures from the shelter, facts about homelessness, statistics from CENS, national awareness events, news and developments, volunteering and fundraising stories, resident stories and staff interviews. We now post at least 3 times a week.

### Results

The results have been very positive. We are consistently reaching a larger audience, growing our numbers of followers – we now have 2,300, and increasingly engaging our audience.

**Emily Seddon**



# PROJECT WORKER

## REPORT

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“  
Creating an environment  
where people can trust you  
is one of the most important  
things we do at CENS”



“This is my seventh year at CENS and I still find it just as exciting as the day I started. I love the challenge, and there is always a challenge because every night shift is different. I also enjoy meeting new people – getting to know the residents and finding out their life story is so interesting and often inspiring.

Creating an environment where people can trust you is one of the most important things we do at CENS. It's that relationship that allows the service users to open up and share any issues they may be experiencing, which then allows us to help them move forward.

We had one man who came to CENS very underweight and he obviously hadn't been able to look after himself very well. His skin was in a poor condition and due to a medical condition, he couldn't stand up straight to shave himself. We knew he was self-conscious and so decided to help him change his bedding every day, and after much discussion we offered him the option of letting us help him shave, which he gratefully accepted.

Bit by bit, he got stronger and eventually he moved on to permanent accommodation. I was sad when he left and worried whether he would cope without CENS' support.

Two years after he moved on, we found out that he is now working and healthier and stronger than ever before. He came to visit CENS when we re-opened after the pandemic to say thank you for the help we had given him when he was at his lowest. It's stories like this that make the job so enjoyable.

I think the biggest contributor to homelessness is family breakdown. This can go back a long way into a person's past, and I've noticed it's a common issue for most of the residents. The lack of support for families in crisis can lead to a person's mental health declining, substance misuse, financial problems and isolation.

That's why the funding we've got for counselling at LifeForce is important – I've seen it really benefit the residents who've engaged as it's often the first times they've been able to talk about past issues.

I am grateful to be a member of the team here at CENS and hope to see it go from strength to strength.”

**Debbie Bell**

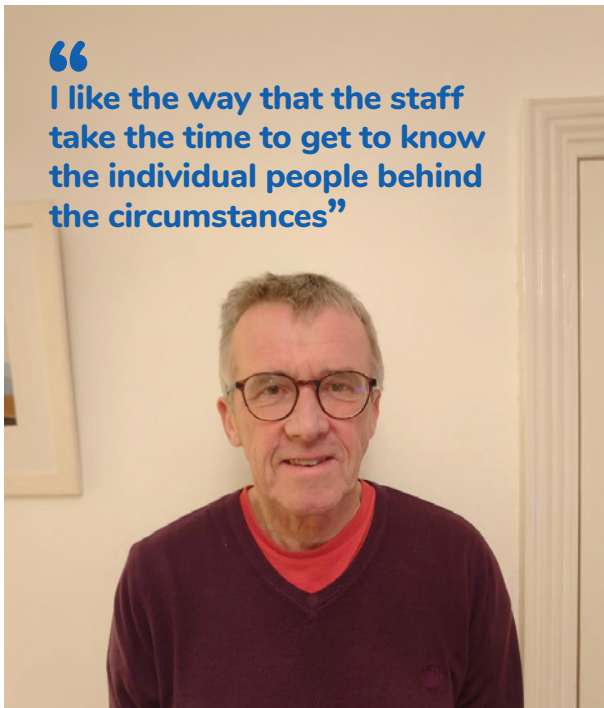
# VOLUNTEERS

## AT CENS

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### Pete is a regular in the kitchen

**Peter has been volunteering for four years and is a regular fixture in the CENS kitchen. Here, he explains why he enjoys volunteering, and shares his thoughts on the benefits and the positive experiences he has had.**



“I came across CENS when I worked at the Jobcentre, and decided to volunteer three or four years ago, when I wanted to widen my horizons a bit.

“I am mainly in the kitchen preparing the evening meal. To be honest, spending a few hours a week doing a bit of cooking and chatting to everyone is no big deal. I do sometimes worry that the evening meal won't be up to scratch, but I've had no complaints so far!

“The residents at CENS come from all sorts of backgrounds and all have different back stories. I like the way that the staff take the time to get to know the individual people behind the circumstances. The barriers homeless people come up against are massive and the staff work really hard to help their residents overcome them. I have also met quite a few ex-residents who call in now and again to keep in touch, which is really nice.

“Volunteering work is good for the community, but it is rewarding on a personal level too. I have met some great people and it's nice to think that you might, even in a small way, have made someone's life a bit easier. I have realised that if you want to

change something, you have to educate yourself about it first.

If I were to offer advice to anyone considering volunteering, I would say to view it as a win-win situation.”

**Pete Newell**

### Karen dedicates her free time to tend CENS' garden

**Our garden volunteer is an expert horticulturist and hopes the garden will improve the residents' wellbeing.**

“When I was volunteering with Colchester Samaritans we supported CENS one Christmas and I have been interested in the work they do ever since.

“Homelessness has always upset me . It makes me angry that it is all too common. The Samaritans' supported them on occasions, so when I left and subsequently joined Rotary Club in Colchester (which does a lot to support CENS), I was able to get involved more directly with helping CENS.

“I love gardening. My father was a Dutch nurseryman here in Colchester. I grew up amongst flowers and nature. I have always loved it - it is one of my favourite pastimes and pleasures.

“I hope it will give an area which is quiet and peaceful. A place to just sit and relax. It would be wonderful if it also gives some of the residents an interest in gardening, plants, flowers and insects. I visit it regularly, to see how everything is growing, try out other plants and generally keep it ‘alive and well.’”

**Karen Thompson**



## Dinners are cooked by Lucy

**Lucy is a volunteer at CENS and has been helping every week since 2019. Her impact has meant residents get delicious, nutrient-dense food while staff can dedicate more time to finding permanent accommodation for those who use the service.**

“I donated some of my Mum’s old linen that was still in good order and which I didn’t want to just throw away. I met Patsi who showed me around the CENS. She was so lovely and friendly, so I asked her about volunteering.

“There was a lot of information in the press about homelessness at the time. Like everyone, I felt a pang each time I saw someone on the streets facing another cold night alone. I was lucky enough to have spare time and the ability to cook for larger numbers so, wanting to be useful, I started volunteering in 2019.

“I spend the morning at the CENS cooking dinner for up to 15 residents. It’s usually a main course and perhaps a side salad, all using the ingredients that are donated from supermarkets around Colchester. Then I tidy the kitchen, chat to the permanent staff and leave after two to three hours.”

“I learnt to cook whilst working in a Swiss hotel, a London wine bar and for the directors’ dining rooms in the city branches of Barclays Bank. I love

food and I like to cook to keep up my skills and efficiency, but more importantly, I like to think of the residents enjoying home-cooked food.”

“If you want to volunteer, I’d advise you choose a charity you have a feeling for. Be friendly and enthusiastic and the wonderful people who work there permanently will welcome you in.”

**Lucy Waddington**





# RESIDENTS' FEEDBACK

## Service users' heartfelt thanks make the work CENS do even more rewarding

“The staff at CENS have gone above and beyond to get me where I am now”

“Outstanding help, advice and support. It far exceeded my thoughts before I arrived. The support offered is never ending and on tap!”

“Amazing staff. Lots of change since the last time I was here – I love the single rooms. I really would like to thank the staff for all the work they do.”



“I don't want to leave! Staff have been brilliant!”

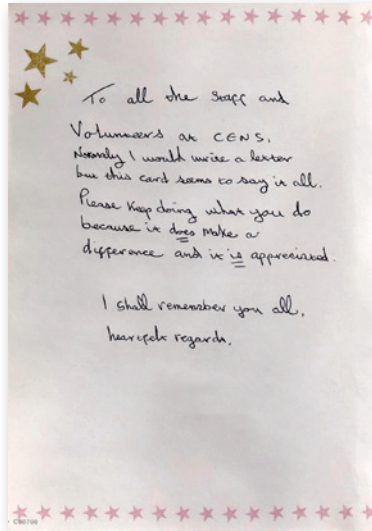
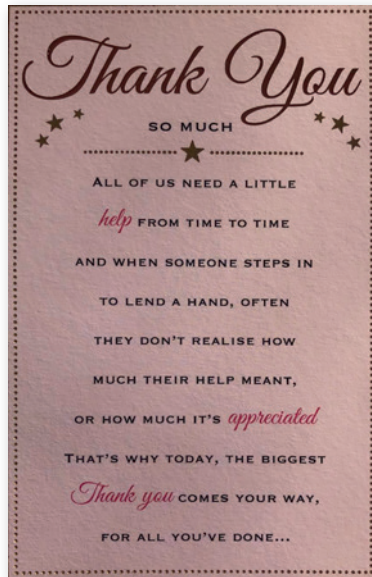
“CENS is a fantastic stepping stone to help get your life back in order”

“Fantastic members of staff who are easy to talk to. Coming to CENS was a blessing in disguise.”

“I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and everyone at CENS for having me, its been a pleasure to be resident there.”

“The team in my view are consistent, hard-working and helpful. Well done to all.”





A service user sent a lovely card

## Residents' poems

These thought-provoking words were written by service users during their stay at CENS

### Patience

**This is a poem of what I want to be:**

I want a business, a plan, a family.  
To grow old with stories to share.  
For my children to ask me, why, when and where?

I want to show I'm worth my weight in gold  
And have all I want before I become old.  
I want to laugh again and find the one  
Sit on the beach under the sun.

Going to move forward with positivity  
Don't rush things to happen, one thing at a time  
So things fall together more easily.  
One day, one week, one month, one year down the line.  
Pace myself for the future, it will all become fine.  
I'll get what I want in life – something to call mine.

### Rise Again

I fell, I failed, crashed and burned  
But knew one day that I'd return  
Stronger and wiser, no more smashes  
And like a phoenix, I'll rise from the ashes.

I'll climb to the top so full of hope  
No longer being the drunken joke  
I will regain what my addiction cost,  
No longer feel alone and lost.

Every day I feel so awful  
Suffering from terrible withdrawal.  
Down my body runs the sweat  
Each drop represents another regret.

Clouded mind, hands shaking  
Make out I'm happy but I'm just faking  
Make out I'm tough, make out I'm strong  
Whilst trying to work out where it all went wrong.

Trying to rediscover the man who was friendly  
The man that's now a distant memory.  
Now the time has come for my hardest fight  
Where a win takes my darkness  
And brings me the light.

# AL'S ANNEXE

## REPORT

### CENS' move-on house is an opportunity for service users to get back to independent living

**Al's Annexe is CENS' move-on house which was acquired in 2017 and is situated next door to the main shelter. It was named after Alun Richards, who was a wonderful project worker at CENS, who sadly passed away in 2020.**

It's a 4-bedroom house with a garden and communal dining room and kitchen. It bridges the gap for residents who are ready to live more independently but can't rent privately for various reasons. Most letting agents and landlords ask for a deposit and charge admin fees, which is too much for someone at CENS to have upfront. Often, the residents are surviving on a minimal amount from Universal Credit and have no family or friends who can help.

Our housing co-ordinator and other members of staff assess how residents are getting on during their stay at CENS. If we feel Al's Annexe would be a good fit, we offer them the opportunity to move in for six months. We are still on-hand for any

queries or support they may need, and we'd only offer someone a place who we felt would be happy living there.

N, a current licensee said, "When I was offered a place next door, I was over the moon. I previously suffered with mental health issues which meant I'd got into rent arrears (although I am now paying them off). I knew no private landlord would take me on as I couldn't get a good reference. It was hard to stick to all the rules at CENS sometimes but now I'm able to have some independence back so it was worthwhile.

By moving into Al's Annexe, they can adjust to living more independently. "After spending a couple of month's at CENS trying to grapple with the housing system and processing what had happened to me, I was ready to get back to looking after myself a bit more which is why Al's Annexe was the perfect fit for me," said one ex licensee. "The opening times at CENS meant I had my day



**Alun Richards worked at CENS for 16 years. He was much-loved by staff and residents alike**

planned out. When I moved across to the annexe, I made the most of having a lie-in but after that I made my own routine and motivated myself to get up and make the most of the day."



We recommend that licensees look for work during this time as well. Often, they've had a break from employment due to being homeless but are keen to get back to work. We charge a reasonable rent so they can still save for a deposit. A recent licensee said, "I found not working while at CENS difficult. Luckily, I have always worked and found employment within the first few weeks of moving across to Al's Annexe. Working, getting enough sleep and eating right is what I'm focusing on now. Struggling financially is something I never want to go back to again."

So far, we've had 11 residents staying at the Annexe. We hope to help many more people back to financial and domestic freedom in the years to come."



**“ Al's Annexe bridges the gap for residents who are ready to live independently but aren't able to rent privately”**



# A RESIDENTS' JOURNEY

## Adam desperately wanted his life to change

Coming back into CENS brings back a lot of memories for Adam – some good and some not so. He says he wants to share his story to give encouragement to anyone else who finds themselves homeless and without hope.



**“**  
**The staff and residents came**  
**to mean a lot to me”**



“Being homeless is horrendous. One day, when I was sleeping in a doorway, I heard a little boy say, ‘look Mummy, there’s a man sleeping there’. That really broke my heart, not only because I was having to go through it, but also that a child saw me like that in what is supposed to be a first-world country.”

“Probation found me the place at CENS and my first night there was surreal. I was scared and lonely. I had been to a homeless shelter before, and it brought back memories – I couldn’t believe I was in the same situation again.”

“It took me a while to settle in, because although I knew it was a safe place, it wasn’t my home. It was only when I realised that the staff were really listening to me and trying to help that I began to feel more comfortable. I remember sitting in CENS’ garden one day thinking that the back wall could do with a lick of paint and I was so pleased that the staff let me paint it. I created a memorial to symbolise the hope that CENS gives to the residents.”

“CENS registered me with various housing associations and that’s how I ended up moving on from there. Waiting for a place to become available was hard because there was a lot of uncertainty and I wanted to plan for the future.”

“In one way, I felt relief the day I left CENS – if I wanted to run around in just my socks I could! On the other hand, it was emotional, as I had been

through so much in the three months I was there. The staff and other residents had come to mean a lot to me.”

“I now have secure accommodation in a house share, am currently on a 6-week training course in groundworks and am soon starting an NVQ in horticulture. I also go to Wellies On (which is a farm where you can just be with animals, which I really enjoy. I now have help from a mental health service, so I’ve finally got the network of support I have needed for a long time.”

“I was in the job centre recently and a youth worker position came up which I’ve applied for. I’ve always been told I am good with youngsters, and I would like to work with young men, to give them something I never had. I needed someone to fight my corner when I was young and that’s what I’d like to do for someone else.”

“CENS was like the fourth leg of a table I really needed. It was a firm but gentle hand that has helped me get to where I am now. I would say the best advice I can give anyone who is in same position as I was in, is to let someone in. When you’re in a state of despair and going through your darkest days, a kind voice can make all the difference. You should never be too proud to ask for help.”



# HOUSING REPORT

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It has been an exceptionally busy year at CENS. We strive to support everyone into move-on accommodation. We are facing new challenges in a cost of living crisis but continue to adapt our strategies and work with our partner agencies.

We represent CENS at the Joint Referral Panel as a pathway for residents that need supported housing to continue their journey to independent living and tenancy sustainment. Many residents do not fit the criteria for this, so we have what can be a challenging task of supporting them to find accommodation in the private rented sector.

We are fortunate to work alongside socially conscious Landlords who support our good work; if they have any suitable affordable accommodation they offer it to our residents first. Unfortunately, the cost of private rentals has increased at an alarming rate and our local LHA rates do not reflect these changes. This results in a substantial shortfall between what they are awarded for rent via the DWP and what their accommodation costs.

Our positive outcomes for managed moves is 63% - which is amazing, and without the hard work of all staff would not be possible. There is such a

huge demand on services across the board; this has resulted in increased waiting lists which means residents stay within our service longer whilst awaiting their housing option.

We continue to have an exceptionally high amount of people trying to refer into CENS with a very noticeable change in demographic. The number of referrals over the age of 60 alongside the number of women has increased since our reopening.

From the first point of contact, we are already investigating the steps required to plan their positive move-on from CENS. Residents can feel bewildered by their situation to begin with but we support and encourage them to be proactive. We hope that by providing a safe environment with supportive staff, structure and routine again, we can work together to achieve the end goal of securing accommodation. We offer residents a safe space, their own room with ensuite, wonderful home cooked meals and a network of new friends. A downside of our project's unwavering support is that on occasion they purposely sabotage their move-on plans because they feel so settled with us. Of course it is flattering to know that we provide such an amazing service but the reality is

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**From the first point of contact, we are already investigating the steps required to plan their positive move-on from CENS”**

that many hours of work are involved behind the scenes. We are always conscious of the reality that a person is rough sleeping somewhere and is hoping today is the day a bed will become available to sleep at CENS tonight. Managing expectations is an integral part of our conversations during the housing process.

Al's Annexe gives us an additional 4 rooms of accommodation, providing another pathway for suitable residents. This is predominantly for those who have found work or are able to find work. We offer very low rent so they can save for a deposit to move into more secure long term housing. This offers them independent living coupled with our ongoing support, being just next door.

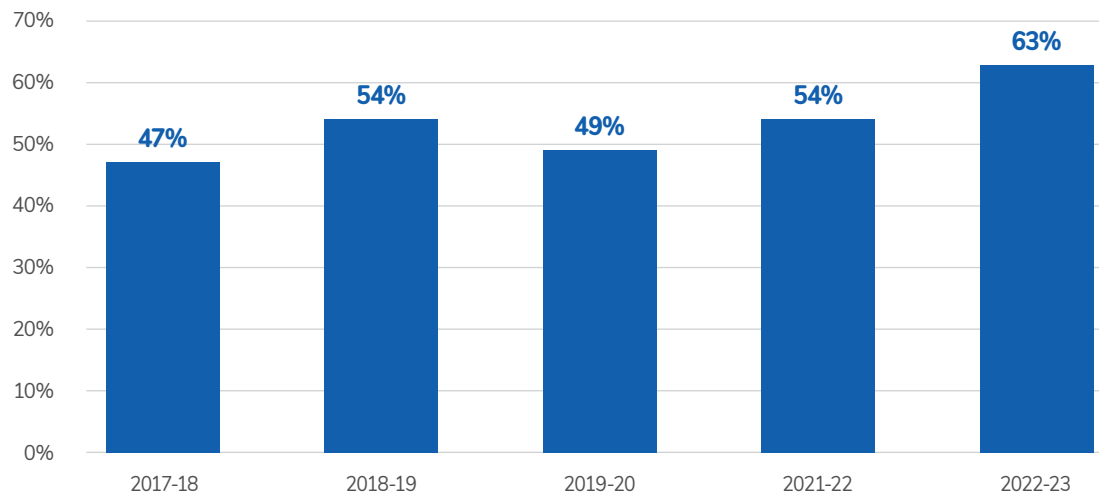
We are looking forward to the year ahead and will embrace new challenges with the same positive energy, dedication and adaptability to best support the homeless in our society.

**Julie Wicks**  
**Housing Co-ordinator**

# OUTCOMES REPORT

## More Positive Outcomes Than Ever as CENS Navigates a Changing World

Percentage of Positive Move-Ons 2017-2023



In this reporting year 106 people were admitted into CENS and 102 left of which 64 were positive planned move ons. This makes up 63% of all residents leaving. Since 2017, we have seen an increase in the number of positive move-ons by

16%, from 47% to 63% a statistic of which we are particularly proud.

To what do we owe this success? CENS has been running for nearly 40 years and you can imagine

the amount of change we have seen in that time. Today's shelter is very different to the one you would see 30, 10 or even 3 years ago. In this time our building has changed, our people, culture and rules have all been reinvented. The CENS you see today is a product of consistent adaptation and improvement, based on the stories and lives of the people who come here, and examination into the real causes of homelessness.

We believe the quality of support provided at CENS now is the best it has ever been. We have a dedicated housing co-ordinator to help navigate the challenges of finding housing, we have a great team of support staff who regularly make time for each resident to find out what they need and what their barriers are, and we have great relationships with other agencies across the town to ensure residents are plugged into the relevant services they need.



## License length increase

### 2022-2023 Planned Move-Ons

2022-2023 Planned Move Ons	Number of residents	Average stay length (days)	% of stays over 10 weeks
Supported Housing	34	60	35%
Private Rented	15	51	27%
Family/Friends	10	36	20%
Council Temporary Accommodation	4	57	25%
Hostel	1	3	0%

Residents have a long wait before they move into permanent accommodation. We initially offer a 28 night stay, this is to ensure engagement within the first few weeks, but in reality it takes much longer to find somewhere permanent; the time it takes to move into supported accommodation is over twice that on average, with one third staying at CENS over 10 weeks. People are waiting a similar amount of time for private rented too. However as long as someone continues to engage with us and has move-on options available to them, we will keep them at CENS until a permanent accommodation is secured.

It is a true testament to our staff and the residents themselves to see so many people doing well. CENS remains an insecure accommodation as those in hostels are still classed as homeless. For

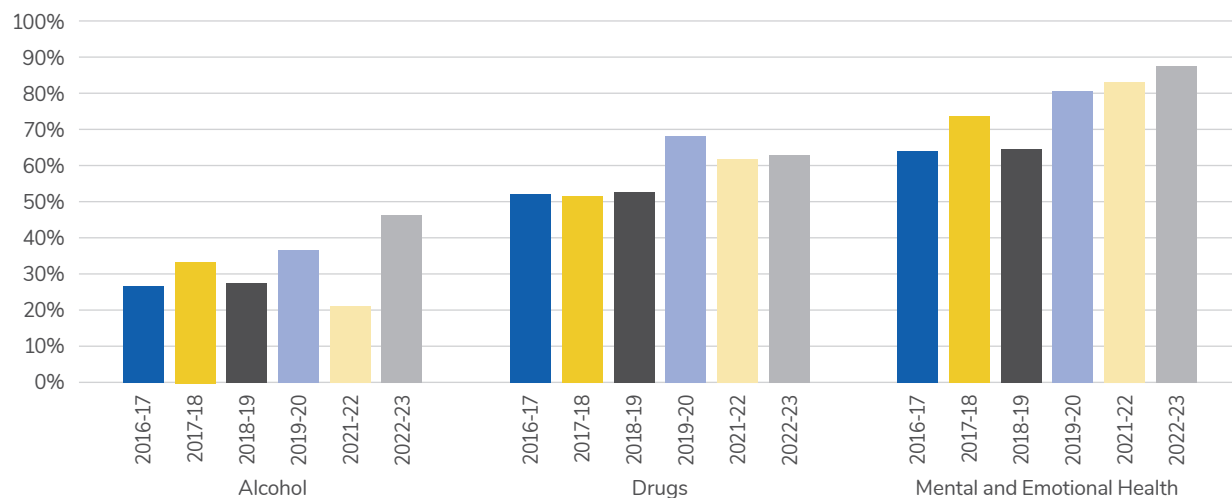
someone to cope here for so long is challenging, but it highlights their engagement and willingness to comply with our rules every day whilst they wait to be housed. Residents often comment on how safe and structured the environment is and they welcome the rules we have in place.

The environment at CENS prepares residents for sustaining their tenancy when they move on. The rules are strict but they are there to help people adapt and support themselves in the future. From the abstinence of drugs and alcohol, to household chores like doing laundry and keeping their room clean, to money management, keeping appointments and staying engaged with external support, CENS gives them the skills to cope in communal environments.



## Changes in Support Needs and Resident Profiles

**Increase in % of Residents with Drugs, Alcohol and Mental Health Support Needs**



When residents come to CENS we assess them for support needs, that is the areas in their life that can form barriers and contribute to homelessness. This informs us on how to best support the resident. Keeping these stats can also build up a picture over time of the changing face of homelessness.

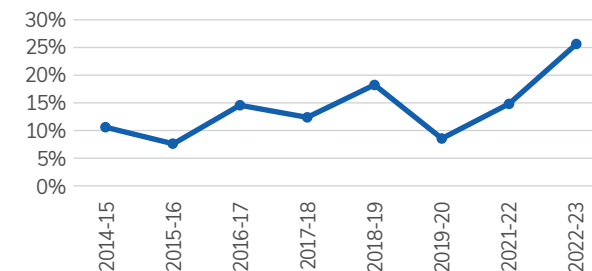
One particular trend we have seen in the last few years is that some support needs are increasing. The number of people coming to the shelter with drug, alcohol and mental health issues is on the rise. Mental health has increased by 23% and is now the most frequent support need we see, with nearly 9 out of every 10 residents presenting with mental health issues. Homelessness and rough

sleeping are in themselves enough to cause stress that spills over into despair and anxiety, however most residents also have a diagnosed mental health condition. The reason for this increase can be attributed in part to a change in culture that allows people to talk about their mental health, but also to the pressure and reduction in mental health services.

Drug and alcohol issues are also on the increase. Again this can be linked to mental health as people use substances as a coping mechanism. Drugs, in particularly cocaine, have become cheaper and more accessible over the last few years.

These trends amongst homelessness reflect the same increases in the general population, but the issues are found much more frequently in people who are homeless.

**Percentage of Female Residents Increasing Over Time**



The demographic of homelessness is also changing. The percentage of female residents has increased by 14% in the last few years, and increased sharply in the last year. This we believe is a reflection of how factors like the cost of living crisis are taking their toll on the population in general and people who would previously had greater support networks are now struggling.

We are proud that the CENS statistical data reflects how we support people to thrive in the face of ever increasing challenges and we will continue to push for excellence in the years to come.

**Patsi Brown**  
Office  
Co-ordinator

**Hannah Tudor**  
Administration and  
Media Assistant,  
Project Worker

# DETAILED STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

	2023 £	2022 £
<b>INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS</b>		
<b>Donations and legacies</b>		
Donations	48,838	43,926
Grants	500	150
	<b>49,338</b>	44,076
<b>Investment income</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>6</b>
Deposit account interest		
<b>Charitable activities</b>		
Grants	-	6,784
Accommodation charges	191,583	133,529
Essex County Council - housing-related support	51,757	51,757
Residents fees	26,764	13,487
Business interruption claim	3,809	10,000
	<b>273,913</b>	<b>215,557</b>
<b>Total incoming resources</b>	<b>323,508</b>	<b>259,639</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
<b>Raising donations and legacies</b>		
March4CENS	1,736	-
<b>Investment management costs</b>		
Administrative expenses	164	227
<b>Charitable activities</b>		
Wages	156,466	127,026
Social security	9,940	7,611
Pensions	3,361	2,675
Repairs to property	24,227	10,053
Cleaning services	8,383	3,449
Rates and water	5,308	5,807
Insurance	8,139	8,444
Light and heat	9,719	9,734
Telephone	3,367	5,290
Postage and stationery	590	207
Residents' supplies and activities	10,424	7,215
Database & IT costs	4,670	1,670
Other staff and volunteers	1,705	774
Subscriptions	1,149	1,495
Storage costs	2,189	2,046
Sundry expenses	112	94
Volunteers matter costs	15,856	2,579
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	2,901	3,584
Loss on sale of tangible fixed assets	259	-
Bank loan interest	6,843	5,904
	<b>275,608</b>	<b>205,657</b>
<b>Support costs</b>		
<b>Finance</b>	<b>875</b>	<b>689</b>
Bank charges		
<b>Governance costs</b>		
Independent examination fees	1,752	1,668
Accountancy fees	2,376	1,002
Legal and professional fees	1,077	1,372
Trustee meeting expenses	-	42
	<b>5,205</b>	<b>4,084</b>
Total resources expended	<b>283,588</b>	<b>210,657</b>
<b>Net income</b>	<b>39,920</b>	<b>48,982</b>







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**[cens4homeless.org.uk](http://cens4homeless.org.uk)**

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