

# Community Stars – Supporting the homeless

## A project of two halves

Like many urban areas, Bournemouth has seen a sharp rise in the number of people sleeping rough in recent years. Bournemouth Churches Alongside Rough Sleepers (BCARS) is offering a number of services to help people get off the streets, find accommodation and build their skills.



Every winter, churches like St George's in Bournemouth open their premises to offer people living on the streets a safe place to sleep. St George's is also involved in Half Time, a project that gives rough sleepers the chance to have a shower and use a washing machine and tumble dryer. Volunteers are on hand to offer support with housing, benefits and connecting with families once again. The final piece of the jigsaw is 2nd HALF, a project that gives people a structured programme with work opportunities. Two days a week, people who have been living on the streets can come along and learn work skills in a newly opened café.

The services are making a huge difference to the community and to St George's itself. Members of the congregation actively hand out BCARS cards to rough sleepers, signposting where people can go to find help.

“ A visitor to the café told me afterwards they didn't know who was a volunteer and who wasn't. I said that's exactly the outcome we wanted, we're a team. ”

**Alan Purchase**  
Project Manager

### Church details

- St George's Methodist, Boscombe, Bournemouth
- Poole Bay Circuit, Southampton District
- Average congregation: 100

### What you'll need

- A network of volunteers
- Premises to offer support
- Partnership with other agencies and churches
- Funding from third parties

### Caring by numbers

- Over 100 volunteers
- 12 beds in each church
- 43 people helped into accommodation
- 235 showers provided
- 270 loads of washing



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