



2024/25

SURVIVE & THRIVE SERVICE



It Takes a City (Cambridge), c/o St Andrews Street Baptist Church, St Andrew's Street, Cambridge CB2 3 AR
Company Limited by Guarantee Registered in England and Wales (No. 12361870) Registered as a Charity in England (No. 1190676)

What is Survive & Thrive?

With support from Cambridge City Council's Homelessness Prevention Fund, and extra monies from unrestricted fundraising, It Takes A City (ITAC) provided support to rough sleepers via our Survive & Thrive (S&T) service.

While Survive and Thrive was initially conceived for anyone in self-contained or shared accommodation with a recent history of rough sleeping or homelessness who did not have a confirmed support offer, it has developed to become much more of an ad hoc service that can respond to a variety of needs.

It was identified that often the transition between hostels could be a difficult one and for those whom ITAC is their "trusted service" we could assist that transition to help ensure their new accommodation was sustainable.

Meet The Team

'When people are on a Streets to Home journey, continuity of support and retaining trusted relationships are paramount. Survive and Thrive plays a big part in ensuring that both are available for those who need them to make their journey a successful one.' **Chris Dade, Support Services Manager**

In addition to the Support Services Manager, Lucy (Support Worker) provided much of the 1-2-1 support. The team were based at St Andrew's Street Baptist Church during the Summer, and at our Crossways winter provision during its months of opening (Nov-Apr).



Flexibility Is Key

The service aims to be agile and flexible, meeting the needs of the individual including:

- tenancy sustainment and resettlement support.
- meals, food parcels and practical help.
- rapid moving in service.
- mentoring and befriending.
- employment outreach.
- pastoral care and welfare.
- supported modular housing.

S&T is a year-round service with, for example, the regular attendance by our Support Services Manager at City Council coordinated Team Around the Person (TAP) meetings, working in partnership to support the needs of those individuals being discussed.

Other multi-agency meetings regularly attended included the fortnightly Street Life Working Group, the weekly health meeting convened by the Access Surgery and weekly TAP Prevention Panel. The latter meets to consider referrals from housing providers within the Streets to Home partnership who have residents under threat of eviction. The panel looked at actions that could be taken to prevent those evictions and allocate funds to address arrears where appropriate. 35 individuals were referred to the panel over the 12-month period (Apr 2024-Mar 2025).



Donations from Buckingham Emergency Food Appeal support our work.

S&T staff also participated in the Housing First Case Group, meeting quarterly to consider referrals. Their experience with individuals who had complex needs helped decide referral outcomes and allocate the best Support Navigator for successful outcomes.

Furthermore S&T regularly attended monthly coproduction meetings organized by the County Council's Changing Futures team. The Support Services Manager was part of the core group organizing workshops for a county-wide network encouraging trauma informed practice, central to S&T's service delivery.

During the first seven months of the year, S&T supported at least 20 individuals through interventions delivered by staff and volunteers. Emergency food parcels were a typical example of this vital support. The service maintained contact with 15 former Crossways residents from 2023-24 as well as many new recipients.

Such interventions often served as initial steps towards working with partner agencies and increasingly occurred before individuals accessed accommodation, extending S&T beyond its original remit of a floating support service for those moving into self-contained or small, shared accommodation.

Spring & Summer

During the summer months the S&T service is based at St Andrews Street Baptist Church (St A's), whose Centre Manager has been a volunteer and part-time employee with ITAC since the COVID pandemic.

The provision of office and meeting space at the church, and the warm/cold hub it provides, enabled S&T to operate close to the city centre, where many rough sleepers are found. The Centre Manager and church volunteers provided significant assistance at various times.



Eileen (Centre Manager) taking delivery of donations at St Andrew's Street Baptist Church.

The central location of St A's facilitated engagement and provided valuable information for multi-agency meetings. The presence of S&T staff also helped the church assess and manage risks associated with some individuals accessing their premises.

Approximately 30 people were supported via St A's throughout the year, with S&T staff assisting known and new rough sleepers alike. Many felt confident in disclosing their sleep sites to S&T staff, enabling the Street Outreach Team to verify them as rough sleepers and refer them to accommodation providers.

As Winter Draws In

After Crossways closed in April 2024, S&T support continued for 15 winter residents. Examples included:

- helping an individual move from temporary accommodation to a housing association tenancy.
- securing interim hotel placements.
- liaising with support workers at partner agencies on behalf of hostel residents.

Numbers supported by S&T generally reduced during these months, as several of the service's recipients moved into Crossways and received assistance from that service. When they moved on, they may have reverted to support from S&T, albeit in a different form to that received previously.

In preparation for Crossways 2024-25, S&T staff accompanied partner agencies such as Street Outreach and the Dual Diagnosis Street Project to engage with prioritized rough sleepers.



Shared house that saved three people from returning to the streets.

They also supported women with a history of service avoidance who had begun accessing The Haven, (another ITAC project providing an overnight safe space for women, operating two nights and one afternoon a week, where S&T staff assisted with cover), arranging visits to Crossways for those women who were rough sleeping, providing reassurance and helping them choose rooms where they felt safe.

Throughout the year, S&T also provided daytime support in many ways (e.g. accompanying to health appointments, contacting a council housing adviser) for women who had accessed The Haven overnight.

As moves to longer-term or alternative emergency accommodation were secured for 26 individuals staying at Crossways, S&T continued supporting 15 of them. Examples included:

- accommodating three individuals without public funds in a shared house while their applications for indefinite leave to remain were processed.
- supporting a former Crossways resident, and three others who moved from other supported accommodation, at a new modular home site.
- assisting with furnishing a Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme flat.

Contact Us

It takes a city to end homelessness. If you are a local business, community, student, faith group or an individual who would like to support our work, please get in touch.



www.ittakesacity.org.uk



info@itac.org.uk



[it-takes-a-city-cambridge](https://www.linkedin.com/company/it-takes-a-city-cambridge)



[ittakesacitycambridge](https://www.facebook.com/ittakesacitycambridge)

Case Study: M's Story



'M' is a 39-year-old male who had lost several forms of accommodation over the last decade, due to a combination of behavioural issues and the accumulation of arrears. Of particular concern to potential providers were past instances of inappropriate behaviour towards female staff.

M had challenges around his mental health and was vulnerable to coercion from associates and suffered two physical assaults during the summer of 2024. A prolonged period of rough sleeping resulted in an increase in alcohol consumption, which heightened both his vulnerability and his propensity to inappropriate behaviour in public places.

Bringing M into Crossways in November 2024, our main focuses were on addressing his mental health through the involvement of the Dual Diagnosis team, and addressing his debts through a Debt Relief Order, for which he received support from Christians Against Poverty.

M showed a real desire for change, looking for opportunities to secure a better future for himself, such as enrolling on a course to learn how to drive a dumper truck, thereby improving his employment prospects.

As the end of Crossways 24/25 approached we could demonstrate to potential accommodation providers the progress that M had made. Supported by not just Crossways/S & T staff but also his TAP team, his success in an environment where both support staff and volunteers were predominantly female confirmed how he had understood the issues that were limiting his housing options and taken advice and action to address them.

With just two days to go before Crossways closed M moved into a supported housing project where he will receive weekday support but can live with a considerable degree of independence