

Cyrenians Outreach Project Marks One Year of Helping Homeless People

An east of Scotland homelessness charity is marking the first anniversary of its Homeless Navigator Project. Cyrenians developed the project to provide advice and support to people sleeping rough in an around Edinburgh and it is part of the charity's admirable work towards eliminating homelessness.

Cyrenians Homeless Navigator Nick Harrold said, "I see the person before I see the problem. Our job is not to do things for people but to help them do things for themselves."

The project is funded by Comic Relief and Essential Edinburgh. The key to the project's success is that it offers peer support delivered by someone who has experienced homelessness himself.

Nick, who has a quarter of a century's experience working with vulnerable people, takes to the streets of Edinburgh several times a week alongside a colleague whose own experience of sleeping rough gives the service a unique advantage

"What makes us different is the combination of my networks and understanding of the way official systems work with the knowledge of the streets and personal connections. Folk open up much quicker than they would if it was just me," explains Nick, who added that his two-person team also liaises with

other specialist agencies including the Bethany Christian Trust, the Community Police Team and Access Point.

“We help people from 18 to their 70s” Nick explained “We try not to keep to set times. We must be flexible because people’s lives are chaotic. You can’t have a one size fits all in this field as square pegs won’t go into round holes.”

Nick and his colleague go to places such as graveyards and alleyways and other places where people seek shelter. They offer support such as advice on how to access benefits, use health services or apply for housing. At other times, a one-off intervention will be enough to help someone rebuild their lives.

“There will be times that we lose touch with people or we can’t find them because they’ve moved on or end up in prison,” continues Nick. “But there are plenty of times when we can make a real difference.”

To find out more about Cyrenians outreach work visit [here](#)



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aims to help homeless
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