



*The*  
**STORY**  
*of*  
**CHRISTMAS**

IMPACT REPORT 2026



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## The Story of Christmas

Founded in 1978, The Story of Christmas is an annual Christmas charity event which is strongly supported by the property and construction industries. Each December it begins at St George's Hanover Square with a spectacular service of Nine Lessons and Carols. Readings are presented by a dazzling array of celebrated names from public life. Festive music is performed by the Band & Fanfare Trumpeters of one of the Foot Guard Regiments and a leading choir. Following the service there is a fully catered champagne reception and charity auction at a leading West End ballroom.

The event raises funds to support a broad and diverse range of charitable projects, benefitting homelessness and both sick and disadvantaged children.

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## Introduction

I am delighted to present this report on the charitable projects completed over the past year and the difference they have made to the people they support. Through project highlights, beneficiary impact and photographs, we hope to bring these achievements to life.

Each project featured has been made possible by the generous support raised through The Story of Christmas event in December, alongside the dedicated fundraising efforts of our Ambassadors. We are deeply grateful to our corporate sponsors, private donors, supporters of charity auctions – and everyone whose commitment and generosity has enabled this work and helped create meaningful, lasting change, now benefitting a great many disadvantaged and vulnerable people.



Marc Corbett-Weaver  
Artistic Director & CEO  
The Story of Christmas



## Charity Selection

Each year The Story of Christmas receives a great many applications - far more from eligible projects that we can possibly support. The Charity Sub Committee meets in February to review these in great detail and recommend a selection to the Board. The Board then considers these carefully before the year's set of official projects is announced.

The Story of Christmas has a clear charitable remit, which dates back many decades and has been adjusted over the years to respond to changing times. We support capital projects (though we occasionally support non-capital projects as an exception) located anywhere in the United Kingdom, managed by registered charities that benefit either homelessness or disabled or disadvantaged children.

Typically we announce our projects in March, fundraise for them throughout the year, culminating in our Christmas event, and remit funds to the charities in January. We then monitor progress carefully and arranged days of visits to view the completed projects.

In the autumn of 2026 our applications process will be moved onto The Story of Christmas's website for the first time.

We are grateful to all who support our charitable work.

Lady Sutton (Gay)  
Trustee & Chair of the Charity Sub Committee



## Ambition Aspire Achieve

Ambition Aspire Achieve is a Newham-based grassroots charity supporting around 950 children and young people each year. Through play and youth hubs, it offers activities, services and support to help young people thrive and fulfil their potential.

### DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

With support from The Story of Christmas, Ambition Aspire Achieve improved its flagship Canning Town hub, Terence Brown Arc, in the Park. The project refurbished its much loved adventure playground and added a nature garden, sensory play area, and outdoor learning and adventure facilities for disadvantaged local children and young people.

### IMPACT STAT

74 children now take part in regular woodland sessions, using the thriving community space to build confidence, resilience, teamwork and social skills. The sessions also support safe risk-taking, physical development, outdoor learning and environmental awareness.

## Beyond Autism

Beyond Autism has supported autistic children, young people and their families since 2000. Its specialist work helps children develop communication and coping skills, while its soft-play and sensory rooms provide vital spaces for learning, emotional regulation and managing sensory experiences.

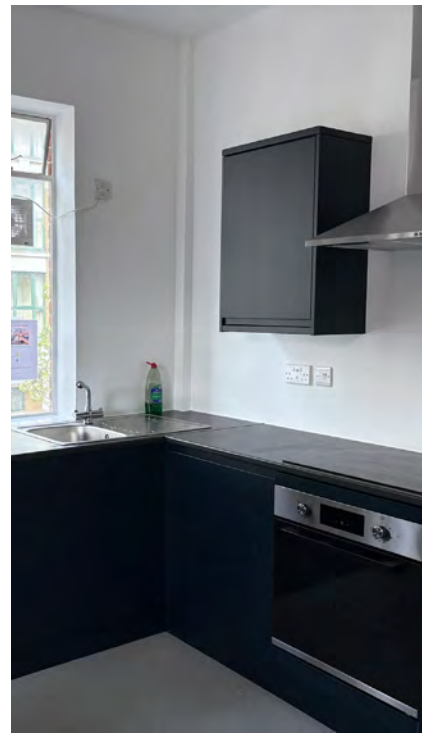
### DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

Refurbishment and upgrade of the much loved and used soft play and therapy room at Park House School

### IMPACT STAT

The impact is visible every day: when learners' sensory needs are met, they are calmer, more engaged and better able to access education. The refurbished spaces also enable staff to deliver therapy and teaching more effectively. Around 56 learners use the sensory and playrooms each year.





## Cardinal Hume Centre

The Cardinal Hume Centre helps children, young people and families break the cycle of poverty and prevent homelessness. Each year, it provides supported accommodation for up to 32 young people aged 16–24, many of whom have experienced care, family breakdown, abuse or the trauma of fleeing conflict.

### DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

With support from The Story of Christmas, the Centre refurbished its kitchens to create warm, welcoming, high-quality spaces that build self-esteem, community and personal growth, while providing residents with a safe and supportive environment.

### IMPACT STAT

The renovated communal kitchen has improved daily life for nine young residents, particularly vulnerable under-18s. With 24-hour staff support on the same floor, it provides a welcoming space to cook, build independence and take part in life-skills sessions on budgeting, nutrition and cooking. It also brings residents aged 16–25 together for shared meals and events, strengthening community, stability and belonging.

## Clapton Common Boys Club

Clapton Common Boys Club supports disadvantaged and disengaged children, and young people in Hackney and Haringey. Through educational, social, health and sports programmes, it helps reduce the effects of social and educational deprivation and improves opportunities for marginalised young people.

### DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

Support from The Story of Christmas created a state-of-the-art natural play space where children of all abilities can develop fitness, gross motor, sensory and social skills. It also gives disabled children a safe, accessible environment for carefree play.

### IMPACT STAT

The space has created a meaningful, lasting benefit for the community, supporting physical development, sensory regulation, confidence and social interaction. Hundreds of children use it each year, including many who previously had little or no access to suitable play facilities.





## Centrepoint

Centrepoint is the UK's leading youth homelessness charity, working to end youth homelessness by 2037. It believes every young person should have a safe home and a job, but many face major barriers due to the housing crisis, the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis.

### DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

The Story of Christmas donated £60,000 to Centrepoint's Transformational Homes Project, funding essential upgrades to 54 Leng Road, (Manchester) a Rough Sleepers Initiative property. The improvements ensure it remains a safe, warm and well-equipped home for young people at immediate risk of sleeping rough.

### IMPACT STAT

The refurbished property provides stability, dignity and a supportive environment where young people can rebuild confidence, feel valued and begin recovery. It continues to offer emergency accommodation and supports residents to move into longer-term housing—all vital work as rough sleeping rises by 3% in autumn 2025.

## Chickenshed

Chickenshed is an inclusive theatre that has created bold, inspiring work for 50 years. Through productions, training, education and outreach, it brings people together to create positive change and make theatre accessible to everyone.

### DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

The Story of Christmas supported the provision of new flooring throughout the theatre which, over the last 30 years, has experienced significant wear and tear.

### IMPACT STAT

The improvements have created a brighter, more uplifting and welcoming environment, reinforcing Chickenshed's commitment to inclusion and inspiration for every visitor. Around 1,500 young people, aged 5–21, attend each year.





## City Harvest

City Harvest is an emergency food charity that rescues more than 100 tonnes of surplus food every week and delivers it free to over 375 London charities. Its partners include school clubs, homeless shelters, food banks and domestic-abuse refugees – all helping people facing food poverty.



### DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

The Story of Christmas funded an expansion of City Harvest's Acton warehouse, including new racking and a mezzanine floor. This created capacity for an additional 50,000 meals and helped City Harvest deliver more than two million meals each month to vulnerable Londoners. In 2025, the warehouse was reconfigured to improve operational efficiency.

### IMPACT STAT

The expansion has significantly increased City Harvest's capacity to support vulnerable people, providing storage for an additional 16,000kg of food. The warehouse reconfiguration also gives managers clear visibility across the 13,000 sq ft site, enabling more efficient day-to-day operations.

## Depaul

Depaul is a youth homelessness charity supporting some of the country's most marginalised young people, whose wellbeing and life chances have been affected by homelessness. It believes no one should have to sleep rough or stay somewhere unsafe.

### DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

The Story of Christmas furnished three homes for Depaul's Young People at Risk service, a trauma-informed programme supporting young people affected by gangs and at risk of serious youth violence. The service provides safe housing and tailored support to help young people leave gang-related lifestyles, pursue their goals and move towards independent living.

### IMPACT STAT

The support has been life-changing for 17 young men. None has reoffended: instead, they have moved away from crime and gang-related lifestyles towards safer, more positive futures.



## Eastside Young Leaders' Academy (EYLA)

EYLA is a Newham-based youth charity founded in 2002. It helps young people fulfil their potential through leadership development, creative arts, academic coaching, mentoring, career guidance, employability skills, community service and a 'parent university'.

### DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

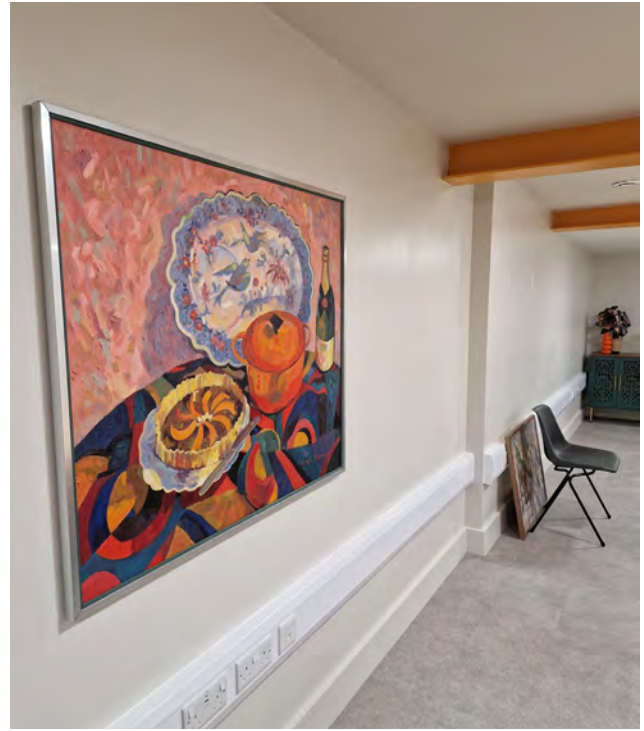
The funding from The Story of Christmas Appeal was used in full to renovate and transform EYLA's building and garden.



### IMPACT STAT

The improved centre will benefit more than 1,000 people each year. This includes 280 young leaders, 120 parents, 150 alumni, 81 former bursary boarders, 300 local pupils, trustees, staff, volunteers and around 300 community visitors. It will provide a safe, welcoming space for learning, mentoring, wellbeing and community action for many years to come.





## HARP



HARP is Southend's leading homelessness charity, providing housing, advice and support to more than 1,000 people each year who are homeless or at risk of losing their home. It helps people rebuild their lives and work towards ending rough sleeping for good.

### DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

Funding from The Story of Christmas enabled HARP to develop a multi-use recovery programme space within its central offices right in the heart of Southend-on-Sea, with the plan to support 900 people experiencing homelessness annually.

### IMPACT STAT

The space gives HARP a safe, familiar setting to build participants' skills, confidence, personal growth and peer support. It has supported successful activities such as a co-produced art mural, where participants led the session, strengthening self-esteem, and creating a lasting representation of the people HARP supports.

## Haven House Children's Hospice

Haven House Children's Hospice provides free specialist palliative and holistic care for babies, children and young people with life-limiting or life-threatening conditions. It supports families at its Woodford Green hospice and in homes, schools and hospitals across North East London, West Essex and East Hertfordshire.

### DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

The Story of Christmas donation transformed the hospice's outdated kitchen into a professional-standard facility. It now supports safer preparation of nutritious meals, stronger food safety and allergen management, and a wider, higher-quality range of meals for seriously ill children.

### IMPACT STAT

Haven House Hospice's Care Kitchen supports 150 children with freshly prepared meals tailored to complex feeding needs and allergies. It also offers baking and sensory activities that build creativity and independence, giving children and families safe, reassuring moments of normality, joy and connection.





## Helen Bamber Foundation (HBF)



The Helen Bamber Foundation Group supports survivors of trafficking and modern slavery who are at high risk of homelessness, abuse and exploitation. Through holistic care, it helps young people, women and men recover from trauma, rebuild independence and lead fulfilling lives.

### DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

The Story of Christmas funded Meadow Pipit, a client-designed therapy room at the HBF Group Trauma Centre. Its calming décor, adjustable lighting and comfortable furniture provide a welcoming space for expert psychologists to deliver evidence-based therapies that support survivors' recovery.

### IMPACT STAT

A Helen Bamber Foundation psychotherapist described the rooms as the best they have worked in. Designed to foster safety and trust, they help clients feel secure enough to share experiences they may never have felt able to discuss before.

## Kids Network

The Kids Network is a mental health charity supporting 8–11-year-olds in nine underserved London boroughs through year-long, one-to-one mentoring. Trained local volunteer mentors use a trauma-informed, child-led approach to help children build confidence, resilience and realise their potential. Since 2016, it has matched more than 1,000 children with mentors.

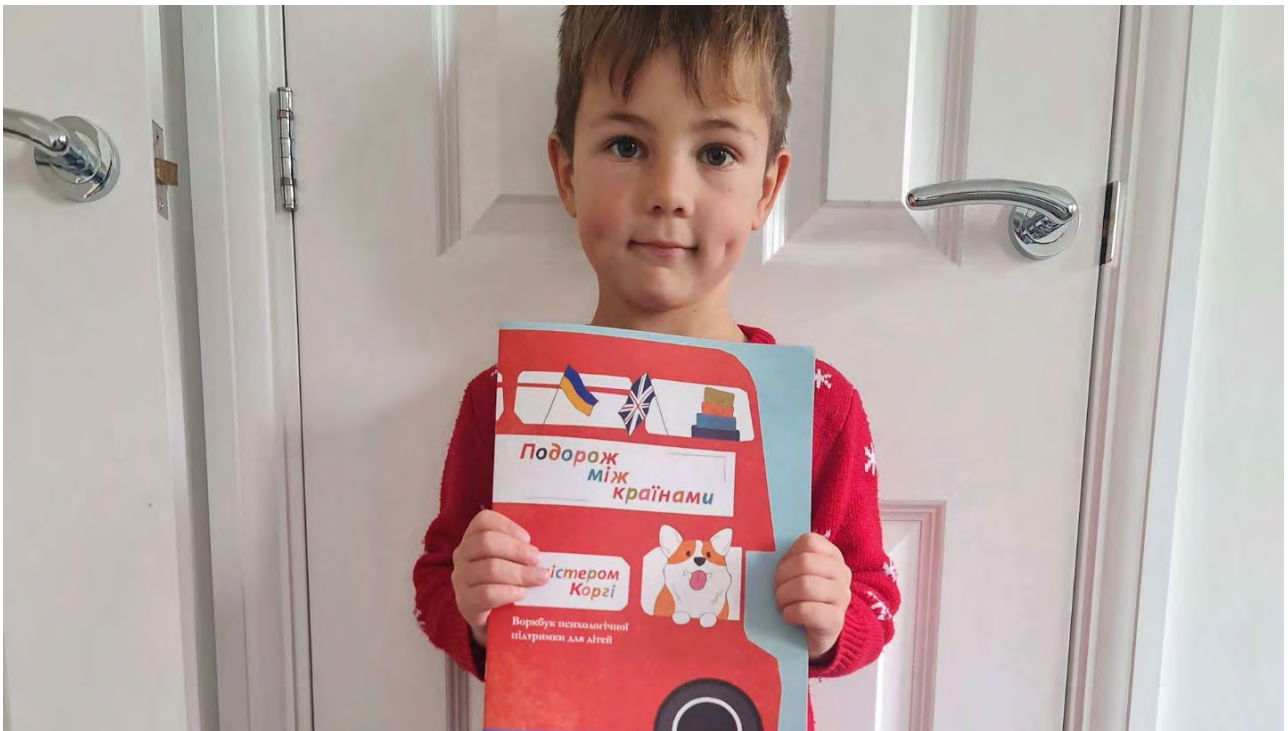
### DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

The Story of Christmas funded The Kids Network mentoring children, aiming to reach a further 1,000 children over the next three years.

### IMPACT STAT

Kids Network provided mentoring to 265 children, with strong outcomes: 87% improved their wellbeing, 90% reported greater happiness and 87% felt more positive about life. In addition, 89% strengthened their social-emotional skills and 82% developed better tools for the future.





## OPORA

Founded after Russia's February 2022 invasion of Ukraine, OPORA helps Ukrainians rebuild sustainable lives in the UK. It provides Ukrainian-language information, emergency assistance and integration support through one of the UK's largest online Ukrainian communities.

### DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

OPORA provided warm coats and boots to 100 newly arrived Ukrainians, as well as 500 copies of A Journey Between Countries with Mr Corgi, a children's mental-health workbook.

### IMPACT STAT

A Journey Between Countries with Mr Corgi helps Ukrainian children in the UK navigate change, emotions and unfamiliar environments through education, creativity and emotional support. Reaching families in more than 20 councils nationwide, it shows the value of community-led support for displaced families. As one parent said: This book made my child happier while being away from home."

## The Passage

The Passage works to end street homelessness by providing practical support and services in Westminster. Its Passage House Assessment Centre accommodates up to 37 residents, offering assessment and help with resettlement. Residents receive breakfast and a hot evening meal prepared on site, with healthy, nutritious options tailored to dietary needs and allergies.

### DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

The Story of Christmas has funded the renovation of Passage House's kitchen. This helps to provide nutritious meals that support residents' physical and mental wellbeing, encouraging them to stay through assessment, and engaging with case workers and support services—helping them move from homelessness into their own accommodation.

### IMPACT STAT

Passage House's kitchen serves as the centre of daily life, providing nutritious breakfasts and hot evening meals for 37 residents every day of the year, plus brunch at weekends. These healthy meals deliver significant physical and mental health benefits.





## Place2Be

Not every childhood brings happy memories. Place2Be provides mental health support in schools, enabling children and young people to cope when facing adversity. Place2Be's counsellors based within schools reach children experiencing problems such as bullying, bereavement and anxiety - clinically improving their mental health.

### DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

The Story of Christmas has funded the refurbishment of 10 Place2Be therapy rooms in London, the upgraded rooms focus on representing the wonderfully diverse school communities Place2Be serves. This means children access therapeutic toys, books, art materials and posters which reflect their lives and support their well-being.

### IMPACT STAT

A counsellor said that they were all so grateful to The Story of Christmas Appeal, having created a more supportive and relevant environment for their students. Around 4,000 children and young people are receiving support each academic year in the Place2Be counselling rooms.

## Restore the Music (RTM)

Restore the Music UK tackles inequality in music education by funding provision in state schools in deprived areas. Since 2017, it has awarded £1.8 million in grants, reaching over 80,000 young people and creating opportunities through music.

### DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

With the help of The Story of Christmas, RTM has extended its funding to reach 1000s more young people and helping them to overcome the barriers which hinder their future journey.

### IMPACT STAT

Benefitting nearly 10,000 4- to 18-year-olds, growing up in poverty in London and Manchester. 2000 instruments have been distributed across 11 primary and secondary schools. Music back in schools is the first step in a pathway out of poverty through education.





## Run Kids Run/ Read Kids Read



### DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

With the support of The Story of Christmas, two Run Kids Run partner schools in Hackney have transformed their inner-city concrete playgrounds into engaging and functional multi-sports green play areas.

The funds have also been used by Read Kids Read, to recondition a Grade 2 listed K2 telephone box into a new community library at a partner school in Islington.

Run Kids Run supports disadvantaged state primary schools by organising running events that bring families, communities, and local businesses together. Corporate sponsorship helps schools fund improvements, while its Read Kids Read programme provides free community book libraries—currently with three Little Free Libraries in Islington.

### IMPACT STAT

This funding has created lasting, meaningful change for children and school communities across three London boroughs - 300 pupils in Hackney, 36 pupils in Camden and 90 pupils in Islington.

## Single Homeless Project (SHP)

SHP has 47 years' experience in helping Londoners in crisis and supporting those who have experienced homelessness to find a place they can call home and to live a fulfilling life.

### DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

With support from The Story of Christmas, SHP has created a vital and inspirational employability hub, which opened in July 2026. It has also upgraded the Comeback Kitchen to help 300 people experiencing homelessness pursue education and employment. Improvements included new flooring, lighting, wiring, kitchen equipment and ventilation.

### IMPACT STAT

**Kitchen: Healthy Eating workshops** – from 100 SHP clients, SHP has trained 26 clients as interns & volunteers. 49 accredited training outcomes have been achieved with eight clients securing paid employment. Since July 2026, an additional three people have entered employment in hospitality and catering careers.

Since the end of July 2026, 200 clients have attended the **Employability and Training Sessions**. 80 qualifications have gained and 20 have gained employment.





## St Christopher's Fellowship

St Christopher's Fellowship provides fostering, residential and support services for children and young people to ensure they can be safe, loved, happy, achieve, succeed and realise their dreams.

### DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

The Story of Christmas has provided new boilers in six homes for homeless young people in West London.

### IMPACT STAT

Since the new boilers have been installed, 41 young people have been helped. In the summer, the bedrooms are much cooler as there are no immersion heaters constantly heating the rooms. The new boilers are far more energy efficient - bringing down running costs and are more environmentally friendly.

## St Hilda's East



St Hilda's East has supported people in Shoreditch and Tower Hamlets since 1889. Today, its Community Centre provides sensory play for under-fives with special educational needs and disabilities, plus activities for 10- to 19-year-olds that build confidence and skills for education and employment.

### DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

With the support of The Story of Christmas, St Hilda's East has undertaken urgent repairs to the roof of the Community Centre. The works were crucial for the sustaining the charity for another 135 years.

### IMPACT STAT

St Hilda's staff no longer dread heavy rainstorms nor have the need to place buckets around to catch the leaks. The Community Centre has had a positive impact on how they set up and facilitate activities, allowing groups to face each other and interact. After the roof works, there was an increase from 17 beneficiaries of the youth programme to 119.





## St Martin-in-the-Fields

Many hostels and refuges for people who have been living on the street lack the facilities where their specific needs can be met. The shortage of specialist provision for women is particularly acute. Women in this group are unlikely to reach their 43rd birthday. The 18 Keys Project, led by St Martin-in-the-Fields Trust, provides a great opportunity to transform an existing hostel in London into a model of its kind for women who have experienced the trauma of long-term street homelessness.

### DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

The Story of Christmas has helped the charity create a new communal kitchen and living space, a one-to-one therapy room and therapeutic garden for the 16 self-contained studio apartments as well as the two additional studio apartments.

### IMPACT STAT

The grant created an accessible, well-equipped space with communal cooking and dining areas, and therapy facilities. The hostel's 18 places support around 22–26 women each year as they rebuild their lives and move towards independent housing.

## Starlight

Starlight brings play to seriously ill children in hospitals, hospices, and at home, helping reduce the fear, pain, and trauma associated with treatment while supporting their wellbeing.

### DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

With support from The Story of Christmas, Starlight brought back its hospital pantomime tour and play activities after a three-year COVID pause. A virtual pantomime also reached thousands of children in hospitals, hospices and at home.

### IMPACT STAT

Starlight's festive tour reached 1,000 people, helping children feel calmer and less anxious during hospital stays. Healthcare staff said the activities made treatment easier, reduced trauma, created positive family moments and helped parents and carers feel more relaxed.





## The Tim Henman Foundation

The Tim Henman Foundation supports disadvantaged young people in deprived communities through sport and education programmes that improve mental and physical health and create opportunities.



### DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

The Story of Christmas funds have improved the performing arts facilities at Cordwalles Junior School in Camberley, creating better extracurricular opportunities for pupils in an area facing significant socio-economic challenges.

### IMPACT STAT

The upgraded facilities benefit all 218 pupils, enhancing performing arts provision, while enabling the school to generate extra income through hall hire and lettings.

## Transform Housing & Support

Transform Housing & Support provides safe, supportive homes for people experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness, including vulnerable young people and those who leave care with complex needs.

### DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

The Story of Christmas funded modern kitchens and bathrooms in Transform's shared homes, helping young people feel safe and supported as they build skills and move towards independent living.

### IMPACT STAT

The funding improved shared homes in Staines, Woking and Leatherhead, benefiting 17 young people initially and hundreds more over time. The upgrades provide safe, homely spaces where residents can rebuild their lives and gain skills for independence.





## Webber Street Homeless Day Centre

Webber Street Homeless Day Centre supports up to 100 vulnerable people experiencing homelessness each week near Waterloo. It provides meals, showers, clothing, healthcare access, activities, and employment support to help people move on from homelessness.

### DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

With support from The Story of Christmas, Webber Street will upgrade showers, heating and ventilation, while adding private consultation rooms and women-only spaces to improve wellbeing and help people move out of homelessness.

### IMPACT STAT

The upgrades now enable Webber Street to offer up to 100 daily guests private support and counselling rooms, alongside reliable hot showers.

## West London Mission

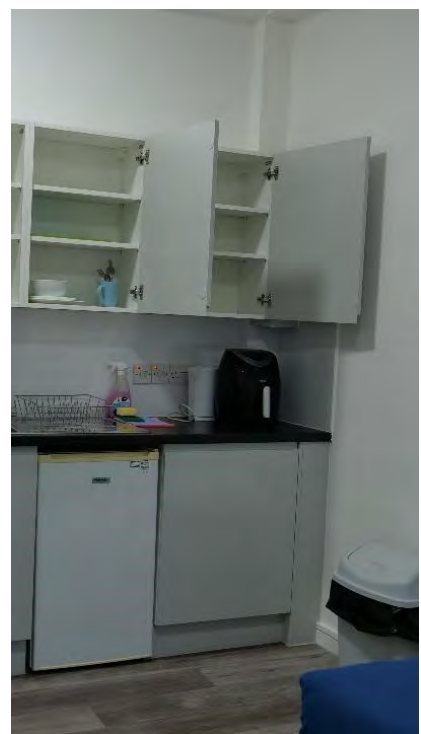
WLM provides an approved home for young men leaving the criminal justice system, helping them reintegrate safely and positively into their communities.

### DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

The Story of Christmas funds refurbished bedrooms, kitchenettes, bathrooms and shared living areas at WLM, which created a welcoming home where residents feel valued and can move forward positively.

### IMPACT STAT

The improved accommodation has helped 42 residents feel valued, build self-esteem, reconnect with family and friends, and gain confidence to apply for jobs.





## World Heartbeat Music Academy

World Heartbeat Music gives diverse, disadvantaged young people aged 5–25 access to music lessons, workshops, practice space and a supportive community where music can open brighter futures.



### DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

The Story of Christmas funding refurbished World Heartbeat Music's Wandsworth Academy, creating a warmer, cleaner and more welcoming space for young people to make music, build self-worth and enjoy concerts with their community.

### IMPACT STAT

The refurbishment has benefitted 50 children and young people, many of whom visit the Academy several times each week.

## XLP

XLP supports more than 4,000 overlooked young people across inner-city London through education, mentoring, employability, sport and the arts.

### DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

The Story of Christmas funding was used to buy a new Minibus.

### IMPACT STAT

XLP's new minibus visits ten inner-city estates each week, providing a safe space, activities and support from youth workers and volunteers to more than 200 young people weekly.



We hope you have found our Impact Report inspiring.  
We would love to have you with us for  
The Story of Christmas this year.

To support, please visit our website:  
[www.socappeal.com](http://www.socappeal.com) and sign up there,  
or email Marc Corbett-Weaver at [info@socappeal.com](mailto:info@socappeal.com).

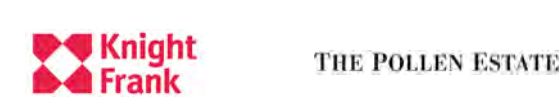
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The Story of Christmas offers grateful thanks to all supports of the 2025 event, who have helped make the great work featured in this report possible.

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"At WeWantMore, we believe in the power of design to make a difference. Contributing to *The Story of Christmas* by crafting its brand identity was an honor and a privilege. Seeing our work help bring these meaningful results has been incredibly rewarding, and we are proud to stand behind the cause."

- RUUD BELMANS,  
CREATIVE DIRECTOR INTERIOR

