



# A BLUEPRINT FOR CHANGE

Empowering our city to  
make change by 2025



By Caring in Bristol



# OUR CITY

## 'We can make change'

Caring in Bristol began life in 1987 as 'Caring at Christmas,' set up by a group of passionate Bristolians who were horrified by the sight of people sleeping rough on cold winter streets. The solution was simple - use as many volunteers as possible, source everything for free, and bring everyone together to make the biggest possible difference for people experiencing homelessness.

We have grown a lot since then, changed name, worked with thousands of volunteers, employed an amazing bunch of talented staff, and now work all year-round with adults and young people at risk of or facing homelessness crisis. We have learned from our past, and our work is more informed and better reflects the complexity and the voice of the people we work with.

But the charity is still powered by the same thing - an ever-expanding group of community volunteers and supporters that care about solving homelessness in our city for good.

Caring in Bristol truly sees volunteering as an effective form of activism and altruism, and the key catalyst for achieving our vision for the city.



# OUR CITY

We live in a brilliant city that constantly tops polls for being one of the **happiest**, kindest, **greenest** and most exciting places to live in the UK.

But it's not something in the (Avon) water – it's because of the many incredible communities that make up this city and our track record of making big, impressive stuff happen, in a grassroots way!

## Prime example:

During the Covid19 pandemic- community groups, local charities, activists, Bristolian businesses, and Bristol City Council pulled together in an unprecedented way to support vulnerable people exposed to risk in our community.

**#BristolCares**

And yet... our city remains full of divisions and exclusions, with **15%** of Bristol residents living in the **10%** most deprived areas in England, **70,400** people living in income deprivation and **21%** of Bristol's children living in low-income families<sup>1</sup>

The most visible of those being the dramatic rise in people sleeping rough on our streets which jumped **1000%** between **2012** and **2018** and continued to rise until the pandemic struck<sup>2</sup>.

## Did you know?

Far from the urban myth that 'homelessness can happen to anyone' homelessness demonstrably affects people unequally. Homelessness is primarily the result of serious systemic social inequality, childhood trauma and childhood poverty<sup>3</sup>.

WHITE MALE	MIXED ETHNICITY FEMALE
Relatively affluent childhood in rural south of England	Experienced poverty as a child Brought up by a lone parent
Unproblematic school career	Left school at 16
Graduated from university at 21	Spells of unemployment
Living with parents at age 26	Living as a renter at 26
No partner + No children	No partner + Own children
Predicted probability of homelessness by age 30: <b>0.6%</b>	Predicted probability of homelessness by age 30: <b>71.2%</b>

# OUR CITY

Those we see on the street in Broadmead and Harbourside have changed in the last 10 years. The dramatic homelessness statistics we read now include more younger people, and people that have much lower 'support needs' that previously would have been able to afford and access a housing option somewhere in the city.

## And why?

Because after decades of underinvestment in local affordable housing, alongside the erosion of national welfare entitlements, people are now at the mercy of the private rental sector. Which for many is the only pathway back out of homelessness in Bristol.



*Bristol's earliest surviving council housing on Mina Rd, St. Werburghs*  
Image: Bristol Housing Festival | c.1900-1905





# OUR CITY

Today Bristolians being given two months' notice on an assured shorthold tenancy, with no available money, resources or support to move into a new home, is the most common way people find themselves homeless in our city.



**This is unacceptable.**

When considering local competition for properties and the level of local rents versus welfare entitlements, it is easy to see why so many people locally find it so difficult to escape the trap of homelessness. While there is significant local ambition to deliver more affordable housing, we know that there is much more to be done to meet the growing need by 2025.

## What we mean by Welfare Entitlements

The financial support that you are entitled to from the welfare benefits system. An important lifeline for many who need extra support through; disability, sickness, pain, employment, housing, poverty and caring for others. These include Attendance Allowance, Carer's Allowance, Housing Benefit, Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and Universal Credit. There is growing concern from charities that these entitlements are currently insufficient, hard-to-navigate and at risk of being outstripped by rising costs of living.



# THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG

Currently in Bristol there are a variety of agencies, organisations and groups, local, national, statutory, voluntary and faith based, all committed to helping those experiencing homelessness. However, many of the initiatives, like ourselves back in 1987, have sprung up as a reaction to the most visible form of homelessness - rough sleeping.

As a country we have spent decades funding emergency support, which sadly is only making a small dent in the tip of the iceberg. This concentrated effort is why the crisis - bar a global health pandemic - appears to visibly get worse year-on-year with little, to no change.

*Some efforts to tackle homelessness are not having the long-lasting impact we all hope for. Vital emergency support for those sleeping rough in our city needs to be matched by investment in 'up pipeline' community-led prevention efforts too.*





At Caring in Bristol, we believe our city has a lot of work to do locally to make our activism more resilient, informed, broader and more diverse in outlook and membership. Achieving this will support our city to better coordinate and collaborate. This will ensure that Bristol's response to the systemic complexity surrounding homelessness becomes truly joined up, enabled and effective by 2025.

Solving homelessness needs to be driven by evidence and data alongside our hearts and values. And importantly it must be informed and led by the voices of those that are experiencing or have experienced homelessness.

We know that Bristolians care greatly about homelessness. Caring in Bristol's inbox and social media overflows daily with concerned members of our community from Henleaze to Fishponds, Stokes Croft to Clifton telling us they want to help.

And this significant increase in visibility of rough sleeping on our shared streets has been met with an increase in outreach from individuals, families, businesses, faith and community groups, media and activists.

Caring in Bristol want to harness this concern and help catalyse joined-up community action that will become a positive force for change by 2025. To create a city empowered to solve homelessness, Bristol's homelessness response needs to be powered by a drive towards more informed community-led crisis and preventative work.



## Did you know?

The way the media reports on homelessness has a huge impact on homelessness and how it is perceived. Responsible media will actively widen the scope of their reporting to include the full spectrum of issues, definitions and voices within homelessness. Working alongside one another, media, charities and activists in our city can report more diverse experiences of homelessness, deepening public awareness about the complexity of the problem, smashing stigma and stereotypes and broadening the discussion.

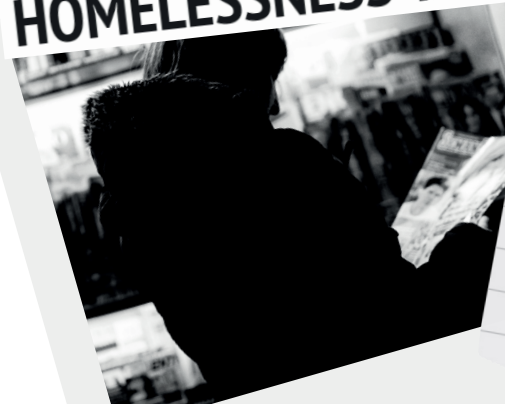
**To end homelessness, we need to change how we talk about it**

**Coronavirus: Thousands 'back on streets' by June**

**'Homeless village' takes on as locals blast piles of rubbish**

**'IT'S WORK TO ME' 'Fak woman begging on street having a FLAT begs for**

## **WORRYING RISE OF 'HIDDEN HOMELESSNESS' IN BRISTOL**



## **Action**

Next time you read a story in the news about homelessness think about whether it reinforces homelessness stereotypes with the photos, quotes and statistics used.

# OUR VALUES

**Our vision** is a city **empowered** to solve homelessness.

**Our mission** is to work in imaginative and creative ways with people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, with the public and with community partners, to bring about lasting change in Bristol and beyond.

**Our three core values** drive our strategy, services, behaviour and culture.

## 1. **We collaborate**

- We learn, share and work alongside everyone in our community to create services that achieve our vision. Our clients and communities inform the design, delivery, and evaluation of our work. We collect and apply evidence to build partnerships and embed our impact. We generously share our resources, time, skills and learnings.

## 2. **We put people first**

- We develop relationships around strengths and take positive risks. We challenge ourselves to be better and are fearless in looking at our own biases as we seek to create a more inclusive and fairer city. We hold that the wellbeing of our staff and volunteers is integral to the positive impact we can make with our clients. The voices and experiences of our clients, supporters, communities and co-collaborators are vital towards achieving our vision.

## 3. **We focus on the end goal**

- We work with our clients, volunteers, and staff to achieve their ambitions. We are here to make ourselves no longer needed and believe Bristol can be the first major city to end homelessness. Every decision we make is based on creating a future where we no longer need to exist.



# Promises to BRISTOL

What we set out below is deliberately ambitious, but we see no other way to effect change. We know that Bristol can be the first city to solve homelessness, but that it's going to take some serious collective effort to get us there.

## 1. We will safeguard Bristolians from ever having to reach homelessness crisis - by providing early support and halting a crisis in its tracks.

### The problem

Too many people reach crisis point in Bristol before getting help, and by then it's often too late. Our local communities need more support to intervene early, and existing advice and housing prevention organisations are under-resourced.

Research shows that, as a society, we lack knowledge on how to prevent homelessness, and the vital role that creating strong community safety nets is needed to achieve that. This is the most important step towards Bristol solving homelessness.



### How we'll do it

- We will pilot and develop new collaborations between homelessness crisis organisations, homelessness prevention organisations, advice services and communities in the city, activating our strong volunteer network and campaign expertise to halt individuals' homelessness crisis.
- We'll build local understanding of homelessness as preventable by developing and expanding our campaign, marketing and educational work and increasing the scope of our free information resources.

### Bristol Benchmarks by 2025

- Support for people who are 'nearly homeless' is instituted effectively. We will prevent people from reaching crisis point and losing their home through work and partnerships with our local communities.
- Bristol understands that homelessness is a broad issue and that rough sleeping is just the tip of the iceberg.
- For all Bristolians to believe that 'Homelessness is preventable!'

# Promises to BRISTOL

## 2. We will provide effective support quickly for Bristolians to move away from crisis.

### The problem

Before the pandemic, shelter options for people experiencing crisis were patchy and too-often detrimental to dignity and well-being, as the lack of housing options resulted in long-stays, or inappropriate choices for individuals. There is a significant risk of the city returning to those models in the absence of funding post-pandemic.

Young people face specific significant barriers in accessing housing, employment and support services, exacerbated by the pandemic. Crisis food provision for those experiencing rough sleeping, or immediate financial distress is clustered in the centre of the city and can sometimes be stigmatising and unsafe or promote dependence.

Christmas is an exceptionally difficult and dangerous time for people in crisis due to the lack of services.

## How we'll do it

- We will further develop and expand our integrated youth support pathway for 18-25-year-olds in crisis, embedded within our communities, making full use of our Bristol Nightstop project and a new youth shelter model, alongside our expert team of youth workers to ensure young people get the personalised support they need.
- We will pilot and develop new collaborations around crisis food provision that moves with people as they move out of crisis, building on the success of our Cheers Drive food provision.
- We will develop our partnerships with local food businesses and restaurateurs and explore employment and training pathways.
- We will develop the scope of our Caring at Christmas project to ensure it continues to meet those in need.
- We will redevelop our adult shelter provision, with a focus on quality, wrap-around support, and community involvement and ownership.

## Bristol Benchmarks by 2025

- That every person experiencing a homelessness crisis in our city has access to high quality shelter options, powered by our communities, and they are quickly supported back into independence.
- No young person spends a night on our streets.
- For food provision to play a key role in creating independence and supporting people into work.
- No one experiencing homelessness is alone at Christmas in Bristol.



# Promises to BRISTOL

## 3. We will build a movement that shifts attitudes and creates sustainable change.

### The problem

Many individuals and organisations want to help, but simply don't know how to, whilst the voices of our clients and grassroots experts are not sufficiently heard. Community-based resources tackling homelessness in Bristol need support, guidance, and more collaborative initiatives to work together to achieve the biggest impact.

When it comes to building communities, there are two styles. The old style is like the game of Tetris, a top-down approach that parachutes in and attempts to fit where it can, often at the expense of those already there. The new style is like Minecraft, a game that allows all those who are actively involved to build and contribute to its community, creating a much richer, more diverse and arguably more effective world. Charities should seek to do the latter, working alongside people to co-create a city that benefits us all, with longer lasting and more impactful results. Caring in Bristol will always work alongside our community and will empower others with our tools, knowledge and resources to work alongside us.

### How we'll do it

- We will work in partnership with key stakeholders to foster and develop new local leadership around prevention and crisis homelessness services. We will influence the shape and output of key strategic and community-based forums to maximise accessibility and promote coordination.
- We will expand the audience for our work and maximise opportunities to increase our visibility and accessibility with key demographics, ensuring as many people as possible across the city are reached by our messages. We will actively research audiences in our city that we are consistently not reaching and work alongside our community to change and become more accessible.
- We will work with our clients, volunteers, communities and supporters to build their platforms and support their voices within local decision-making.

### Bristol Benchmarks by 2025

- A city full of passionately informed supporters and allies for those experiencing homelessness.
- Diverse local leadership that can pull on the levers of local and national decision making.



# Promises to BRISTOL

## 4. We will develop evidence to mobilise further change



### The problem

Readily accessible, holistic, real-time data and evidence to understand homelessness problems locally is in short supply.

It's difficult to collaborate across the community when people don't understand the gaps, and where they can best play their part.



#EndItWithEvidence

### How we'll do it

- We will work collaboratively with everyone locally and nationally to collect local data, and scope and produce an annual state of homelessness in Bristol report.
- We will create real time data accessible to all.
- We will invest in research and evaluation resources.
- We will support the development of community-led spaces such as the Bristol Homeless Forum.

### Bristol Benchmarks by 2025

- That every Bristolian has accessible and objective evidence and tools to understand and act on our city's homelessness crisis.
- We have a range of new partners inside and outside of Bristol, who similarly are interested in building new models and creating change.



# Promises to BRISTOL

## AND two goals just for us

1. We will build a charity organisation worthy of our city and make it clear that you are not a 'Caring in Bristol supporter' – we are YOUR charity.

## The problem

We've grown fast and are ambitious. We've got catching up to do internally, and some collective blind spots. Now we need to invest in resources and skills to be the organisation we need to be to achieve our vision, mission and goals.

We want to hold ourselves accountable for our actions and intentions by making this an active part of our strategy, because effective people management and organisational management is an important tactic towards creating a city empowered to solve homelessness.

## How we'll do it

- We will invest in a programme of external expertise around diversity, equity and inclusion, and work towards creating new opportunities to increase diversity and inclusion initiatives - permeating absolutely all areas of our organisation.
- We will invest in opportunities for reflection throughout all areas of the organisation, including giving all staff access to once monthly individual and group reflective practice sessions.
- We will invest in developing a high performing and highly engaged governance and leadership team - with the skills, passion and drive to hold us to our mission, vision and values and accountable to our communities.
- We will invest in new back-office systems, policies and procedures, and planning and management systems.

## Bristol Benchmarks by 2025

- A staff and volunteer team that reflects the communities we are active in, work alongside, respect, platform and serve.
- An organisation with the capacity to think, reflect and act.
- An organisational culture that supports everyone to be empowered, enabled, efficient and effective.
- A charity that maintains an ambition strategic vision and an activist edge.

# Promises to BRISTOL

## 2. We will keep our income sustainable and independent



### The problem

Insecurity around our funding can be detrimental for the longer-term collaborative work we want to achieve in our city. A sustainable and diverse income is not the goal of our organisation, but it is an important tactic to achieve our vision and mission.

Funding our future in a transparent, values-led and accountable way is vital for our organisation to create sustainable change.

## How we'll do it

- Grow our supporter base in innovative and empowering ways, that centre around their experience, values, autonomy and goals.
- Develop our expertise, internal systems, and financial transparency, holding ourselves accountable to our community and our values.
- Be experts at telling our story, demonstrating our impact and communicating the outcomes of our services in a way that platforms client endeavour and community action over charitable intervention.

## Bristol Benchmarks by 2025

- We have sufficient resources to match the scale of our ambitions for Bristol.
- Our supporters, clients and communities are fully empowered to have a stake in the way we operate.
- We have a diversity of strong relationships with larger, long-term funders.



## TAKE ACTION, JUMP ON BOARD AND PLAY YOUR PART

### COMMUNITY HERO?

Donate to us and consider funding our future (and the future of Bristol) by supporting our work with a regular monthly donation. This allows us to think further ahead when supporting clients, creating and imagining services and focussing on the end goal.

We have a dedicated Supporter Engagement Coordinator who is there to support your event, fun run, 5-a-side tournament, cake sale, virtual fundraiser, zoom panel talk and quiz night (the world is your fundraising oyster) every step of the way.

Contribute to our website editorial by writing a blog, article or working alongside us to make content.

Tweet your local councillor and MP – asking if they have heard about our work using [@caringinbristol](https://twitter.com/caringinbristol) as we would love to speak to them about our manifesto for change.

### SOCIAL BUTTERFLY?

Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn or Instagram and get stuck in sharing our campaigns, graphics, stories, advice on how to help people and free resources. This helps us to spread the word about our work and ensures our messages reach further around Bristol.

### ACADEMIC MAESTRO?

Help us improve our impact by shaping the evidence we use to design our projects and influence the wider homelessness sector.

### ABSOLUTE BRISTOL LEGEND?

Tell your employer, community action group, sports team, art club, University society or halls, friends and family about us.

### BUDDING ACTIVIST?

Sign petitions we post on our social feeds.

## JOIN@CARINGINBRISTOL.ORG.UK

### CARING CORPORATE?

We want to work alongside businesses, supporting you to make your CSR effective, targeted, fun and local – we can support you and your staff with education, skills, resources, volunteering and we'll demonstrate how your fundraising can play a meaningful role in the future of the city.

Volunteering with us or let us help direct your skills to one of our partners.

### COMMUNITY ACTION GROUP?

We would like to work alongside you and empower you with tools, resources and specialist knowledge.

### LOCAL COUNCILLOR OR MP?

We want to support you in caring for your constituents and ward members. Whether it's providing you with information on support services, or specialist knowledge around systems-change. We are here to work alongside everyone in our city and are excited to engage and educate everyone in Bristol working towards solving homelessness.

Gift us something we need (get in touch with us about what donations we are looking for so we can make sure we only receive useful items for our clients and projects.)

### PERSONAL PLATFORM?

If you're a Podcaster, radio host, journalist, panel host or event extraordinaire we are always delighted to be asked to speak or be interviewed. We have a wealth of knowledge, expertise and charisma that we are excited to share.

### CAMPAIGN GROUP?

We are always on the look-out to partner with like minded campaign groups to educate and influence our city. Help us campaign to stop national welfare policies from being short-changed, effectively putting the private rental sector out of reach for people experiencing homelessness.

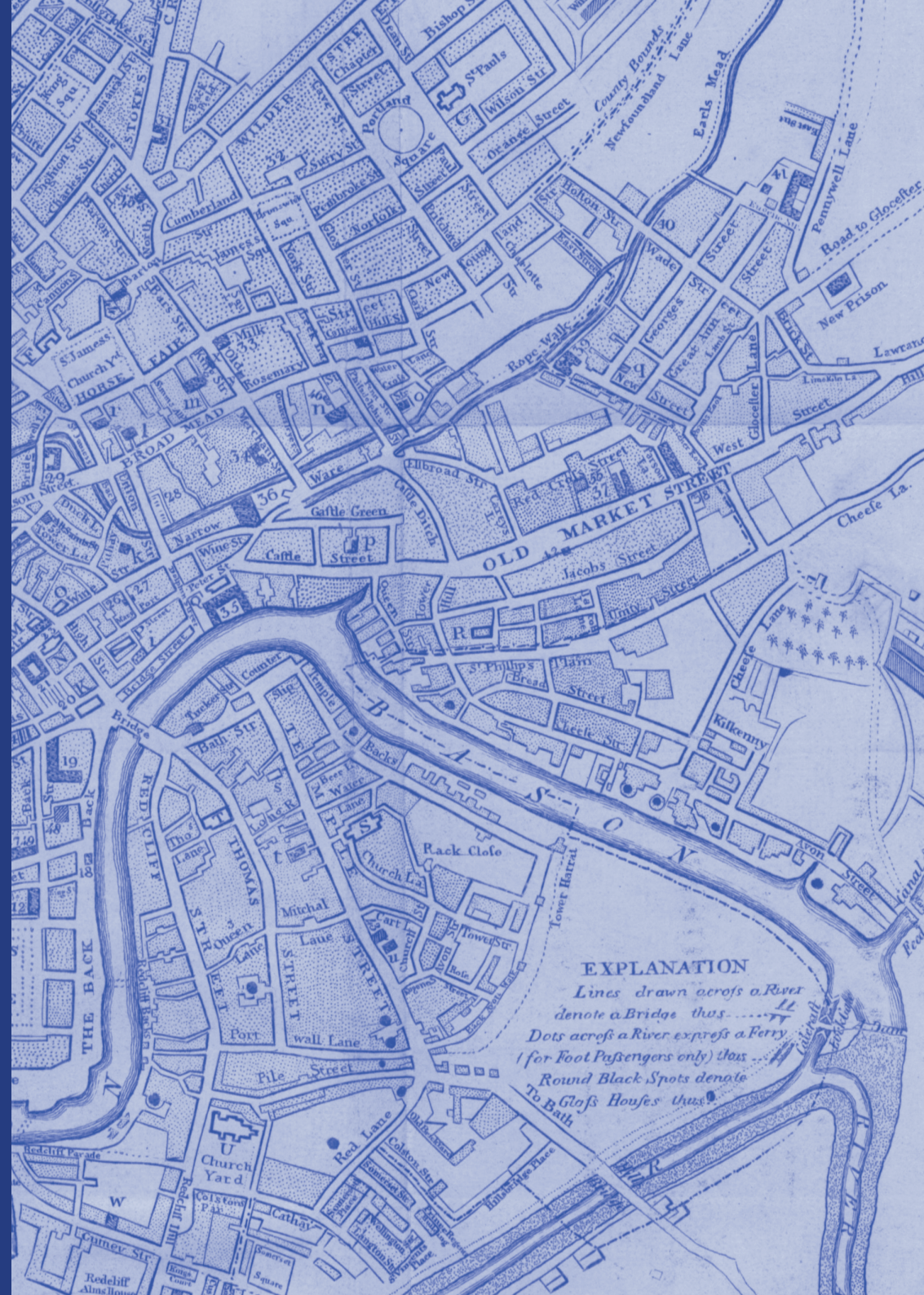
### SOCIAL INVESTOR?

We want to work alongside charitable grant makers and trusts who share our vision and want to help fund the new initiatives that can help solve homelessness in Bristol.



# WE'RE CREATING A CITY EMPOWERED TO SOLVE HOMELESS- NESS JOIN US?

THIS CITY CAN – SO LET'S MAKE IT HAPPEN!  
[JOIN@CARINGINBRISTOL.ORG.UK](mailto:JOIN@CARINGINBRISTOL.ORG.UK)





Caring in Bristol

# A BLUEPRINT FOR CHANGE

Take action and  
pass this on

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Registered charity Number: 1151645